

# INTUITIVE COGNITION

A Key to the Significance of the Later Scholastics

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## INTUITIVE COGNITION A KEY TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LATER SCHOLASTICS

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*To*  
My Mother and Father



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## INTRODUCTION

As originally planned, this work was to have been an extensive historical study of the doctrine of intuitive cognition from its origins in the Augustinian tradition to its flowering in the fourteenth century, with special emphasis on the fate of this doctrine subsequent to William Ockham.<sup>1</sup> Different circumstances, however, made a revision of this plan necessary.

In the first place, it was, and still is, impossible to consult the manuscripts which contain most of the information relative to the fate of this doctrine in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. And from what little evidence we possess it seems safe to conclude that the most interesting and important aspects of this doctrine were developed precisely in those works which are at present not accessible.<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, recent developments have shown that an introductory study is necessary to justify the larger historical study that was originally planned. Several years ago an article dealing with one aspect of Ockham's teaching on intuitive cognition ap-

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. the announcement of this intention by Fr. Philotheus Boehner in *Traditio* I (1943), p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> Michalski (in several articles that we shall have occasion to refer to later) has published numerous isolated texts from the MSS. of the 14th and 15th centuries. These fragments provide sufficient grounds for the belief that the *whole* manuscripts would prove of immense interest to a student of the later history of the doctrine of intuitive cognition. But if these fragments are read in the light of what one is able to discover from a systematic study of the doctrine of intuitive cognition as expounded in the *complete* works of men like Scotus and Ockham, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Michalski has misinterpreted the teaching of those scholastics he dismisses so summarily as "sceptics". And one of the main reasons for this misinterpretation seems to be that the texts quoted by Michalski have been snatched out of their context. To avoid duplicating Michalski's error, therefore, it has been thought better to postpone a more extensive historical study of the teachings of the later scholastics on intuitive cognition until it is possible to consult these manuscripts in their entirety.



peared in *Traditio*,<sup>3</sup> and the reception accorded that article in certain circles made it clear to the present author that his project would be considered unnecessary, and even indefensible, unless he could first show that there is a very urgent need, on systematical grounds, to study the doctrine of intuitive cognition as developed by the later scholastics.

Then too, M. Gilson has found in Ockham's teaching on intuitive cognition one of the major reasons for the breakdown of scholasticism and the seeds of the "scepticism" which he finds infecting all of modern philosophy and most of mediaeval philosophy.<sup>4</sup> Such a view of the doctrine of intuitive cognition would make a complete history of this doctrine at most a rather superfluous documentation of a *negative* influence in scholasticism. Our study of the subject, however, has convinced us that the doctrine of intuitive cognition is really a very *positive* influence in scholasticism; and we feel that an exposition of the doctrine from this point of view should have an important effect on the popular view of the later middle ages as a period of decline for scholastic philosophy.

Finally, prominent neo-scholastics are finding it necessary to have *some* doctrine of intuitive cognition in addition to the theory of abstractive cognition which they find in St. Thomas. Unfortunately they tend to take their ideas on this point from modern philosophers, forgetting that the scholastics themselves had a well-developed theory of "intuition" which might be expected to adapt itself to neo-scholasticism more naturally than the widely divergent speculations of men like Bergson, Kant and Descartes.

For these reasons it became apparent to us (a) that we could not hope to do justice to a *complete* history of intuitive cognition at the present time, and (b) that, even if this were possible, it would first of all be necessary to show that such a history might make a positive contribution to scholastic thought on the purely systematical level—i.e., would contribute something to-

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Ph. Boehner, "The Notitia Intuitiva of Non-existents according to William Ockham", *Traditio* I (1943), pp. 223-275.

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1938), especially ch. 3.

wards a realization of the ideal which Pope Leo XIII had in mind when he initiated the neo-scholastic movement: *veteris nova augere et perficere*.

We have therefore limited ourselves to a careful and rather extensive exposition of the notion of intuitive and abstractive cognition as found in the writings of Scotus and Ockham. Scotus was chosen because he seems to be the first of the scholastics to try to incorporate this distinction into his system on a large scale. He is therefore an excellent introduction to a consideration of the problems which made an incorporation of this distinction necessary, and also of the problems which grew out of the incorporation of the distinction. Ockham was chosen (a) because he is the historical and logical successor of Scotus on this point, and (b) because a misinterpretation of his teaching on intuitive cognition has earned for him the title of sceptic, and is largely responsible for the blanket condemnation of later scholasticism as decadent and hypercritical.

As a preface to these historical studies we have added some comments on the Thomistic theory of abstraction. These are intended to show how it was possible for the later scholastics to feel the need of revising some of the theories of their predecessors; and also to suggest to neo-scholastics that the conclusions of the later scholastics on this point are worthy of a more sympathetic hearing than has hitherto been accorded them.

Finally we have added a few remarks on the systematical significance of the doctrine of intuitive cognition. But these remarks, like the aporetic discussion of the theory of abstraction, are of secondary importance in comparison with the historical research on Scotus and Ockham. We should like to insist on the fact that any merit this work may have should be attributed to the thought of Scotus and Ockham, and not to any speculations of our own.

Our primary purpose, then, has been to give an *accurate* account of the teaching of Scotus and Ockham on intuitive cognition. A secondary purpose has been to try to evaluate the significance of their teaching on this point from the point of view of the historian of philosophy and of the *ex professo* philosopher.





## PART I

### APORETICAL

We must, with a view to the science which we are seeking, first recount the subjects which should be discussed. These include both the opinions that some have held on the first principles, and any point besides these that happens to have been overlooked. For those who wish to get clear of difficulties it is advantageous to discuss the difficulties well; for the subsequent free play of thought implies the solution of the previous difficulties, and it is not possible to untie a knot of which one does not know . . . Hence one should have surveyed all the difficulties beforehand, both for the purpose we have stated and because people who enquire first without stating the difficulties are like those who do not know where they have to go. Further, he who has heard all the contending arguments, as if they were the parties to a case, must be in a better position for judging.

ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics*, Bk. B (3), ch. 1.

## CHAPTER I

### DISCUSSION OF DIFFICULTIES

#### 1. ARISTOTLE AND THE SCHOLASTICS

Neo-scholastic text-books often give the impression that different scholastics developed complete and autonomous systems of philosophy. This is wrong on two counts. First of all, none of the scholastics invented or created or developed a *new* philosophy as a *system in itself* and separate from his theological system as a whole. Philosophical problems, for them, were always an organic part of a theological synthesis; and the only philosophy with any systematic pretensions that was known to them was the philosophy of Aristotle. But Aristotelianism, especially as interpreted by the Jewish and Arabian philosophers, was not a system in the strict sense; it only seemed to be. And this is the second and more important point we wish to emphasize.

The scholastics who followed Aristotle as *the* Philosopher apparently did not realize that Aristotle himself had not reduced his philosophical speculations to a definite system. He had, of course, outlined his ideal of systematization in the *Posterior Analytics*, but he had not applied this ideal to his own writings. If, like St. Augustine, he had felt the urge to write a book of *Retractiones*, mediaeval philosophy would probably have developed along vastly different lines. But because he did not write such a book, the scholastics accepted all of his writings as though they were of equal value and as though they all developed a single and consistent line of thought. In other words, Aristotelianism was accepted as a static *system* of thought. Actually, as modern research has shown, there are many Platonic elements in many of Aristotle's works, and a systematization of Aristotelianism would have to eliminate some of these elements or at least explain away some of the contradictions in Aristotle on the basis of a change of viewpoint. For Jaeger has shown that

Aristotle wrote some of his works when he was a devoted pupil and follower of Plato, others when he was an independent Platonist among Platonists, and still others when he was a leader of his own school. But this school of his was not conceived as a rectifier of fundamental Platonic errors; rather was it the logical continuator and refinery of the best in the Academy.<sup>1</sup>

Hence many of the *dicta* of Aristotle are now seen not so much as difficulties which must be reconciled in order to preserve the illusionary notion of static coherence, but as evidence of a dynamic development in Aristotle's thought. Consequently, many of the Aristotelian "axioms" which suddenly found themselves entrenched in thirteenth century scholasticism and were subjected to conflicting interpretations which did credit neither to the original Aristotelian meaning nor to the Christian tradition, have now to be re-examined in the light of the discoveries of modern research. The notions of *nous* and of the *intellectus agens* are cases in point. Another example is the "axiom": *Intellectus est universalium, sensus autem particularium*. The implications of this *dictum*, taken in the usual exclusive sense, lead very easily, as Meyer has pointed out, to a "degradation of the individual in favor of the universal".<sup>2</sup> And the different scholastic orientations towards the problem of universals can usually be traced back to a different interpretation of this "axiom" and a different attitude towards the relative importance of singulars and universals.

But lack of systematization in Aristotle and the scholastic ignorance of the real historical Aristotle are not the only factors that complicated the scholastics' assimilation of *the* Philosopher. The influence of the Arabian and Jewish commentators is sufficiently well known to excuse us from developing that aspect of mediaeval Aristotelianism here. We wish rather to note briefly a few points that are often overlooked:

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle, Fundamentals of the History of His Development* (transl. by Richard Robinson, Oxford, 1932), *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Hans Meyer, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (transl. by Rev. Frederic Eckhoff, Herder, 1944), p. 79.



1. The early scholastics apparently did not realize (or at least were not concerned with the fact) that Aristotle's LOGIC had been given a metaphysical twist by the addition to the *Organon* of Porphyry's *Isagoge*. From the *Isagoge's* interpretation of the *Categories* of Aristotle arose the problem of universals and innumerable discussions about a principle of individuation. The net result of this was "to give to scholastic interpretations of Aristotle's *Organon* a metaphysical orientation and emphasis which, in Aristotle's own logical treatises, is carefully avoided. Its effect on mediaeval metaphysics was also important, since it tended, by reading problems of logic as problems of metaphysics, to cause metaphysical questions to be discussed in forms borrowed from logic."<sup>3</sup>

2. The PHYSICS of Aristotle were given a metaphysical twist by the fact that the editorial compiler of the Aristotelian lecture notes now known as the *Metaphysics* included in this work many elements which properly belonged to a discussion of natural philosophy (i.e., to the *Physics*) and not to a discussion of what Aristotle called First Philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

3. Through this metaphysical twist given to natural philosophy, and through the metaphysical twist given to logic (as explained in 1 *supra*), PSYCHOLOGY also received a metaphysical twist. For the tract *de Anima* was always considered, both by Aristotle

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<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Ernest A. Moody, *The Logic of William of Ockham* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1935), pp. 15-18. Professor Moody shows that one of Ockham's greatest contributions to mediaeval philosophy was to track down this systematic and historical confusion "to its roots in the Porphyrian and Boethian interpretations of Aristotle's logic". A result of this critical analysis is the elimination of the "neo-platonist theory of knowledge (that) had been insinuated into the interpretation of Aristotle by almost every teacher of aristotelianism that the Middle Ages had". And the criticism by means of which Ockham achieved this result is "grounded in the constant effort to maintain the distinction between logic, natural science, and metaphysics, and between modes of signification and the things signified".

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. W. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics* (Oxford, 1924), I, xiii-xxxiii, and Jaeger, *op. cit.*

and by the scholastics, as a part of natural philosophy or *Physics*.<sup>5</sup>

The results of these historical events are well illustrated in various scholastic theories of knowledge, and especially in that part of the current neo-scholastic theory of knowledge which is known as the "theory of abstraction". Since most neo-scholastics nowadays claim to be following Thomistic principles in their exposition of the theory of abstraction, we may be permitted to refer to their exposition as accounts of the Thomistic theory of knowledge. This does not imply, however, that we consider these expositions to be accurate accounts of what St. Thomas himself taught. As a matter of fact, it is becoming more and more difficult to decide exactly what St. Thomas did teach, in view of the many (and even radically divergent) conflicting opinions among those who profess to follow the Angelic Doctor not only in spirit but *ad litteram*.<sup>6</sup> We therefore wish to make it very clear that we are not concerned here with the problem whether or not St. Thomas taught what some of his modern disciples say he did. That is a question to be decided by the experts in Thomism. Our concern is with the following facts:

(a) St. Thomas did teach *some* theory of abstraction, and this theory was criticized by later scholastics;

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<sup>5</sup> Fr. Gredt, O.S.B., is one of the few authors of neo-scholastic text-books who have realized this connection and retained it in their expositions of scholastic thought. Psychology, for him, is therefore considered under the general heading of *Philosophia naturalis specialis*, with the specific title: *De Anima seu de Ente Mobili Motu Augmentationis* (cfr. Joseph Gredt, O.S.B., *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae*, Friburgi Brigoviae: Herder & Co., 1937, ed. 7, Vol. I, p. 323 *et seq.*).

<sup>6</sup> Cfr., for example, the recent discussion between C. de Koninck and Fr. I. Th. Eschmann on the primacy of the common good; and the fundamental differences among Thomists on epistemological problems. For a Thomistic attempt to unravel the latter, cfr. L.-M. Regis, O.P., "La critique néo-thomiste est-elle thomiste?" *Philosophie*, cah. II (Etudes et Recherches Publiées par le Collège Dominicain d'Ottawa, n. III, 1938), 95-199; and for a non-scholastic's reaction to this situation, cfr. Gerald Hinrichs, "Thomists—Black Cat—Dark Room", *The Personalist*, XXI (1940), 288-300.

(b) the theory of abstraction continues to play a major role in neo-scholastic expositions of scholastic philosophy;

(c) this theory is considered to be an integral part of *all* scholastic philosophy, so that a denial of this theory is thought to involve a denial of the most fundamental scholastic principles.

To appreciate the historical and systematical significance of these facts we propose to undertake a critical analysis of certain aspects of the theory of abstraction which neo-scholastics attribute to St. Thomas. For practical purposes we refer to it as "the Thomistic theory", but this attribution is purely incidental and is based on faith in the scholarship of those neo-scholastics who claim that, as they interpret it, the theory of abstraction is Thomistic.

## 2. THE THOMISTIC THEORY OF ABSTRACTION

It may safely be assumed that readers of this book are familiar with the broad outlines of the Thomistic theory of abstraction. As a basis for a discussion of certain aspects of this theory we have chosen Professor Rudolf Allers' excellent account of it in *Essays in Thomism*.<sup>7</sup>

What seems to have escaped the attention of most neo-scholastics is the fact that Professor Allers has devoted much time and labor to pointing out the very real difficulties inherent in this theory. Since an understanding of these difficulties is essential if we are to appreciate the significance and historical background of the doctrine which led to a revision of the theory of abstraction in the later middle ages, we propose (a) to recapitulate Dr. Allers' difficulties, and (b) point out several others which he has not treated. As an introduction to this end we shall synopsize those parts of his essay which serve our present purpose and shall add a running commentary of our own. For

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<sup>7</sup> R. Allers, "Intellectual Cognition" in *Essays in Thomism* (ed. by Robert E. Brennan, O.P., New York: Sheed & Ward, 1942), pp. 41-62. As far as we can discover from a comparative study of this article, the texts of St. Thomas, and the interpretations of other Thomists, Dr. Allers' account seems to conform, at least on essential points, to the "common-teaching" of neo-Thomists.



convenience sake we shall arrange our synopsis in numbered propositions:

1. Sense impressions are the only primary source of knowledge. Sense experience is achieved through objects acting on the sense organs by means of material agents. The alteration of the sense organ is, ontologically speaking, an information of the sense organ by the (accidental) form originating in the sense object. This is only a particular application of a general principle, according to which all change demands an agent from which the power of change emanates, and is to be explained by an accessory form being added to the thing affected (*loc. cit.*, pp. 41-42).<sup>8</sup>

*Comment:* Note how the Physics with a metaphysical twist is at the very root of the Thomistic theory of knowledge. Even sense-cognition is explained ontologically on the basis of hylemorphism. But why must it be explained "ontologically"?

2. The alteration produced by the physical agent in the sense organ is called a *species sensibilis*. Concomitant with the alteration of the organ, there is a psychical immutation, so that the *species sensibilis* is a psycho-physical process or the result of such a process. The *species sensibilis* is described as an image or *similitudo* of the perceived object. The terms "image" and "*similitudo*" have to be taken in the sense in which we call a curve an image of a chemical process. These terms refer essentially to a strict correlation between things of a different nature, scil., that the one may stand meaningfully in some context for another (pp. 42-43).

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<sup>8</sup> Each sentence in this paragraph is a direct quotation from Dr. Allers' article. But we have left out intermediary comments for the sake of brevity and continuity. We have therefore omitted quotation marks and will continue to do so throughout this synopsis for the same reason. In justice to Professor Allers we must warn the reader that this method of procedure cannot give as equitable and fair an impression of Dr. Allers' article as a reading of the article itself would give. We therefore urge our readers to study the excellent original itself.

*Comment:* Dr. Allers' precision of the meaning of image and *similitudo* indicates clearly the connexion between the theory of knowledge and a theory of logical supposition (i.e., what a term stands for or signifies). The development of an extensive and coherent theory of supposition was one of the contributions of later scholasticism, and led in some cases to the rejection of a *species* entirely. For how can a *species* "mean" or stand for the object it represents unless the object itself is known directly or at least independently of the *species* which represents it? A minor detail is the following: Is the *species sensibilis* a process or the term of a process? Dr. Allers leaves this question open in the present article. But elsewhere he says that the *species impressa* (sensible or intelligible or both?) is "more in the nature of a process than a content."<sup>9</sup> Now according to Dr. T. V. Moore's classification of fundamental forms of mental activity,<sup>10</sup> this would seem to imply that the *species impressa* cannot be known. And if the *species* is not known, how can the object be known (according to a theory which postulates a *species* as an "image" which stands meaningfully for the object)? Moreover, how can a *process* be meaningful in the sense in which Dr. Allers defines "image" and "*similitudo*"?

3. Every particular or singular thing, which is the proper object of sense cognition, owes its being to individualizing first matter and a specific form . . . In the particular resides, so to speak, the specific and universal form which is common to all particulars of one species, but which has no real existence outside of the individual particulars. Anything whose existence depends on matter is a particular, and can be known only by an equally material faculty. Particulars therefore can be known only by the senses (p. 44).

*Comment:* Here the theory of individuation by matter is introduced to show that the intellect cannot know material singulars. In this we see the influence of the metaphysical

<sup>9</sup> Cfr. "The Intellectual Cognition of Particulars", *The Thomist* III, (1941), p. 104.

<sup>10</sup> Cfr. Thomas Verner Moore, O.S.B., *Dynamic Psychology* (2nd ed., Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1926), pp. 41-44. This criticism only applies if Dr. Allers means by "process" and "term of a process" what Dr. Moore means by "mental functions" and "mental products".



twist given to logic by Porphyry's *Isagoge*, and the effect of this metaphysicized logic on the theory of knowledge. As Dr. Allers formulates the problem here it seems safe to conclude that the theory of individuation by matter is logically prior to the theory of abstraction. For it is already decided (a) that there are specific and *universal* forms in particulars, even though they are individualized; (b) that these forms are the proper object of the intellect; and (c) that the senses, because they are material, cannot apprehend these forms. Then, in order to explain how the intellect apprehends these forms, the theory of abstraction is evolved. Obviously it would be illogical to cite the theory of abstraction as evidence for (a), (b), or (c), or as evidence for the theory of individuation by matter. Sometimes it seems as though neo-scholastics overlook this simple logical requirement, as we shall see later.

This argument, as Dr. Allers formulates it, is crucial to the whole Thomistic theory of cognition. It presupposes an exclusive interpretation of the Aristotelian "axiom": *Intellectus est universalium, sensus autem particularium*. In other words, it presupposes that the intellect cannot know singulars *at all* ("Particulars therefore can be known *only* by the senses"). It is difficult to reconcile this statement with later concessions to the effect that the intellect does know particulars after all, even if only indirectly. Moreover, when we look for evidence in support of this "axiom" we run up against the same difficulty we mentioned with regard to evidence for individuation by matter, etc. Again it is obviously impossible to cite the theory of abstraction as evidence for this "axiom", since the axiom itself is assumed as one of the reasons which demand that the theory of abstraction be evolved. We shall devote more space to an analysis of these difficulties later.

4. Thomistic psychology maintains that the intellect always and exclusively operates on a phantasm presented by imagination (p. 51).

*Comment:* Recent developments in theories of imageless thought deserve a closer and more sympathetic study than neo-scholastics have so far given them. Dr. Allers himself has taken these developments into consideration in his article "The Intellectual Cognition of Particulars",<sup>11</sup> but after a

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<sup>11</sup> *Loc. cit.*, n. 9 *supra*.

study of the literature on this subject he is forced to admit that "the difficulties of the Thomistic position remain. The grasp of the intellect on the particulars is as problematical as ever. We do not see how the intellect manages to get hold of the phantasm; nor how it becomes aware of the intelligible species; nor how it is capable of influencing the sensitive powers in so determined a manner as to evoke the right phantasm, that is, the one which corresponds to this particular concept."<sup>12</sup>

5. Thus far we have considered the working of the sensitive powers as preliminary to and preparatory for the operation of the intellect. But however close their relationship, the sensitive and rational faculties of man are separated by an unbridgeable gulf. The sensitive faculties are material, operating by means of corporeal organs; their proper objects are material particulars. The intellect, on the other hand, is immaterial and its proper objects are universal and immaterial forms (p. 52).

*Comment:* This proposition contains two statements that are worthy of comment. In the first place, how can one talk of an "unbridgeable gulf" between sensitive and rational faculties, if one is forced to admit (as Dr. Allers is) that this gulf is actually bridged in reality? Surely this is the Cartesian dualism of which philosophers of the Franciscan School are so often accused. Furthermore, if there is such an unbridgeable gap between the sensitive and rational faculties, there must be the same type of gap between material objects and the intellect—and that for the same reason. As a matter of fact, Dr. Allers refers to this second gap or gulf in another article.<sup>13</sup> While not everyone will agree that such a gap exists, many will agree with Dr. Allers that such a gap is theoretically postulated by the the function of the *species impressa* to bridge that "un-Thomistic theory of cognition. For it is supposed to be bridgeable gulf" between the material and the spiritual. If there is no such gap, the *species* is postulated in vain; it

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 129; the last objection mentioned by Dr. Allers refers, of course, to the Thomistic postulate of "conversion to the phantasm" as a means of knowing material particulars. We shall discuss this question more in detail later.

<sup>13</sup> Cfr. "The Intellectual Cognition of Particulars" (*loc. cit.*, n. 9 *supra*), p. 155.

is superfluous. If there is such a gap (and the exclusive interpretation of "*Intellectus est universalium, sensus autem particularium*" certainly seems to imply that there is), the *species* does not, in fact, bridge it. For the active intellect is said to be necessary in order that the *species sensibilis* be "dematerialized". Now the active intellect itself must be either wholly spiritual, or wholly material, or partly material and partly spiritual. If it is wholly spiritual it cannot be cognizant of the *species sensibilis* any more than the passive intellect can—because of the gap. If it is wholly material (and no scholastic ever thought of such a thing) it can grasp the *species* (because in this case there would be no gap), but it cannot dematerialize it. If it is partly spiritual and partly material, you may be able to solve the problem of dematerialization of the *species*, but only at the expense of postulating another gap within the active intellect itself. For the human composite is partly spiritual and partly material, and that is precisely the reason why the "gap" difficulty arose in the first place. This looks like an impasse. If you postulate a gap, you cannot explain intellectual cognition of material particulars. If you do away with the gap, you have to do away with the *species*. The latter alternative is obviously the only reasonable one—but it changes the complexion of the theory of abstraction.

The second statement that we consider worthy of comment in the above proposition is the one about "universal and immaterial forms" being the proper object of the intellect. We have already discussed this in our comment to Proposition 3 *supra*, and have shown that a proper understanding of this conclusion is crucial to the whole Thomistic theory of cognition. Here it appears in the form of a self-evident proposition, or at least in the form of a proposition that has been established elsewhere independently of the theory of abstraction. Where?

6. The senses perceive only particulars, since nothing else is to be discovered in cosmic reality. The universal nature common to many particulars of one species has, therefore, to be disengaged from the individual percept. The process by which this is accomplished is the process of abstraction (pp. 52-53).

*Comment:* The preceding propositions have all been leading up to this point. But this proposition presupposes that there is a universal nature common to many particulars of



one species, and that this *universal* nature is the proper object of the intellect—so proper, in fact, that the intellect can know nothing else. So the theory of abstraction appears to be nothing more than a description of the process whereby the *universale in re* is known. Since the existence of this *universale in re* is presupposed by the theory of abstraction, this theory cannot be considered as a solution of the problem: What is the *universale in re*? Nor can it be considered even as a logical link in a chain of argument which tries to solve that problem. For the theory of abstraction presupposes the solution which is known as Moderate Realism.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to the difficulties we have outlined in the above comments there are other difficulties which Professor Allers himself has noted. These are:

a) "It is not easy to form an adequate and satisfactory idea of the manner in which the active intellect deals with phantasms. The expression 'illumination' is not very helpful and is not much clarified by the subtle remarks of Cajetan on this point" (p. 55);

b) "Neither is it easy to get a satisfactory perspective of the co-operation between the sensitive and intellectual powers in general" (p. 55);

c) "The intellect as such is capable of getting hold of the material and the particular. On the other hand, there must be some connection between the intellect and the particular, because we form judgements about particulars when we relate a particular subject with a universal predicate" (pp. 55-6);<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> It is interesting to note that Dr. Allers, in his discussion of the problem of universals at this point, refers only to Extreme Realism (the Platonic doctrine of the separate existence of the Ideas), Nominalism, and the so-called mean between these two extremes, namely, Moderate Realism (the Thomistic solution). No mention whatever is made of the other genuinely scholastic solution—Realistic Conceptualism.

<sup>15</sup> That the intellect as such is incapable of getting hold of the particular is, of course, a hypothesis based on Aquinas' conception of matter as the principle of individuation, and his interpretation of the "axiom": *Intellectus est universalium*, etc. This reveals a patent fallacy in arguments which try to prove the immateriality of the intellect (or the spirituality

d) "The existence of the active intellect can hardly be demonstrated by experiments. We are indeed conscious of a definite activity when trying to form a new concept . . . but this consciousness is not equivalent to an introspective awareness of the active intellect" (p. 61).

These difficulties are serious enough in themselves, but their real significance seems to have been overlooked. The general attitude of those who go so far as even to admit that there are difficulties seems to be that they are difficulties of detail only—details which, even if they are never satisfactorily explained, do not militate against the main outlines of the theory of abstraction.

As a matter of historical fact, however, these difficulties did not seem to be of minor importance to other scholastics. They considered them reflections of an essential shortcoming of the theory itself, and hence were led to restate the whole problem in other and *more systematic* terms. It is this question of systematization that we wish to insist on. And to bring out the difficulties from this point of view more clearly we shall analyse more closely a problem that we referred to in our discussion of Dr. Allers' account of the Thomistic theory of knowledge, namely, the problem of the intellectual cognition of material particulars.

### 3. INTELLECTUAL COGNITION OF MATERIAL PARTICULARS

This is an especially thorny problem for the followers of St. Thomas. Dr. Allers has written a very extensive article on this subject also, and he designates it as "*of pivotal importance . . . a problem that must be analysed and solved if it is not to become a serious stumbling block for Thomistic philosophy.*"<sup>16</sup>

of the soul) by appealing to the theory of abstraction or the nature of universal concepts *as explained by that theory*. For the immateriality of the intellect is *presupposed* by the theory of abstraction.

<sup>16</sup> "The Intellectual Cognition of Particulars" (*loc. cit.*, n. 9 *supra*), p. 95; cfr. also Franz Sladeczek, S.J., "Die intellektuelle Erfassung der sinnfälligen Einzeldinge nach der Lehre des hl. Thomas von Aquin", *Scholastik* I (1926), 184-215.

Actually this problem long ago did precisely what Dr. Allers fears it may one day do. It proved such a serious stumbling block to later scholastics that a new doctrine was evolved to explain what the Thomistic theory could not and cannot explain while remaining true to its principles. Since it is the main purpose of this book to present and evaluate the "new" doctrine of the later scholastics, we shall discuss this second article of Dr. Allers' at some length because, as we said before, it deals with a problem which, historically and systematically speaking, is and always has been crucial in any discussion of intellectual activity.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, this article is a better introduction than most to some of the difficulties inherent in the Thomistic Arabic-Aristotelian theory of cognition as a whole, and the main purpose of this *aporea* is to present these difficulties with a view to setting the historical and logical scene for the development of the new ideas contained in the doctrine of intuitive cognition.

It is an evident fact of experience that the human intellect does know material particulars. The Thomists admit this fact, but maintain that the intellect "is incapable of any *direct* knowledge of the material particular *because* the intellect is immaterial."<sup>18</sup> According to them, therefore, "any knowledge the intellect has of the (material) particular is indirect or accidental. This knowledge is obtained by a certain turning back to the phantasm . . . that is, by the intellect retracing the steps which led it from the phantasm to the intelligible species (*species intelligibilis*) and to the concept (*verbum mentis*) itself."<sup>19</sup>

There, in a few words, we have the problem and its solution. Now it is very instructive to note how the problem arises. We

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<sup>17</sup> This article is outstanding, not only because of the author's well-deserved reputation as a psychologist, but also because of his refreshing intellectual honesty which enables him to see and face up to problems which are either overlooked or ignored by others. Prof. Allers has, to an eminent degree, followed Aristotle's ideal of investigation (quoted at the head of this chapter). He will therefore understand, I am sure, that my criticism of his articles is undertaken in the same spirit.

<sup>18</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 87; italics mine.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.



are conscious that we do know material particulars.<sup>20</sup> There is no empirical evidence which forces us to conclude that we do not know them immediately or directly. Certainly we are not conscious of the reflexive activity postulated by the Thomistic theory in an ordinary act of simple apprehension. Why then is such reflexivity postulated? Because, we are told, certain metaphysical principles indicate that we *cannot* know material particulars—at least not directly. Therefore we *do* not. In other words, faced with the undeniable fact that we do know material particulars (the proper object of sense, according to the proponents of this theory) in an intellectual manner and in their particularity, two alternatives present themselves: (a) either the notion of intellect (*intellectus est universalium*) must be revised, or (b) if it is to be retained, some explanation must be devised to show how the intellect does what it is, by definition, supposed not to do, namely, know material particulars. Obviously, back of this whole discussion stands the axiom: *Intellectus est universalium, sensus autem particularium*.

The remarkable theory of “conversion to the phantasm”, then, was surely an attempt to retain the idea that *intellectus est universalium* while leaving room for the fact that it also *est particularium*. But since this seems to obscure the essential difference between intellect and sense (*intellectus est universalium, sensus autem particularium*), a further distinction has to be introduced: the senses know particulars *directly*, while the intellect only knows them *indirectly*—by a “*conversio ad phantasma*”.

Unfortunately this explanation does not solve the problem at all. For the phantasm itself is a material particular.<sup>21</sup> So the new solution leaves us where we started from: the intellect knows

<sup>20</sup> Dr. Allers (pp. 96-7) goes to some pains to elaborate proofs for this fact, proofs which are almost identical with those elaborated by Scotus when faced with the same problem.

<sup>21</sup> This is true whether “phantasm” be taken in the sense of “image” or “storehouse of sensible images” or “synthesis of the actual sensations, derived from the object *hic et nunc* in the act of perception”; cfr. Moore, *Cognitive Psychology* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1939), p. 126.

material particulars by some sort of conversion to, or reflection on, another material particular.<sup>22</sup> But this hardly seems to be a satisfactory explanation, since it merely transfers the problem to another level: How does the intellect know the material particular which is the phantasm?

One could argue against this aspect of the theory of "conversion to the phantasm". As a matter of fact, Dr. Allers himself has done so. But may we suggest that this is a waste of time from a systematical point of view,<sup>23</sup> unless we first discover whether the problem of the *indirect* intellectual cognition of material particulars is real or imaginary. If it should prove to be a fictitious problem, we may save ourselves the trouble of evaluating any solution, however ingenious, that philosophers have to offer. For we are interested only in real problems.

Dr. Allers tries to forestall this criticism by claiming that this problem is "meaningful only within the totality of Thomistic conceptions"<sup>24</sup> and "exists in fact only within Thomistic philosophy."<sup>25</sup> But, as a matter of historical fact, the problem also exists in any scholastic system that bases its psychology on Arabic-Aristotelian metaphysics. Thus, to cite one example, it caused a certain amount of trouble to Scotus. But he did not do violence to facts in order to save the system. He at least tried to reform the system in order to conform to factual evidence.

It is interesting to observe that this "radical" procedure seems to be dismissed as unthinkable by some neo-scholastics. Consider, for example, the following statement by Dr. Allers: "During the last thirty years experimental psychology has

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<sup>22</sup> Cfr. Allers, *Essays in Thomism*, p. 56: "The phantasm, however, is itself a material particular, and represents, very often, a material particular thing."

<sup>23</sup> Though from an historical point of view, of course, it may be of interest to a limited number of specialists.

<sup>24</sup> "The Intellectual Cognition of Particulars", p. 95.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.



accumulated a number of facts apparently irreconcilable with the Thomistic principles of intellectual cognition. There are, of course, facts of which St. Thomas was absolutely ignorant . . . There are other problems, however, of which St. Thomas was perfectly aware, but which have taken on another aspect since his time by reason of more recent discoveries. In these cases one has to ask whether the ideas of St. Thomas can be preserved without modification, or whether they have to be adapted—without however abandoning basic principles—to the new facts.”<sup>26</sup>

At first sight this seems to make quite a concession. It admits that certain recently discovered facts militate against the Thomistic theory of cognition and suggests that perhaps some modification of the ideas of St. Thomas may be necessary. Elsewhere Professor Allers has pointed out that St. Thomas' own solution of how the intellect comes to know material particulars is incomplete, indecisive, and not thoroughly satisfactory.<sup>27</sup> In addition, this particular problem demands immediate attention, for it is an integral part of a system whose proponents stress consistence and coherence. But the unfortunate feature of such a system is that, like a chain, it is no stronger than its weakest link. And here we have what an eminent Thomist himself considers a very weak link in the Thomistic “chain of being”. Now what has been done to strengthen this weak link? Dr. Allers admits that his own attempt at fortification has failed: “We cannot boast of having proposed definite and wholly satisfactory solutions of these problems; we hope the way has been prepared for further enquiries.”<sup>28</sup> Of St. Thomas' own solution he says: “It is all a very ingenious explanation, but does not, unfortunately, eliminate the difficulty.”<sup>29</sup> Yet none of his colleagues to date has taken up the challenge to remove this “potential stumbling block for Thomistic philosophy.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>29</sup> *Essays in Thomism*, p. 56-7.

<sup>30</sup> “Intellectual Cognition of Particulars”, p. 95; note that Prof. Allers says “philosophy” and not just “psychology”.

Although Dr. Allers suggests that St. Thomas' ideas may stand in need of revision, he mentions only two possible approaches to the work of revision: (a) can the ideas of St. Thomas be preserved without any modification, or (b) is some *adaptation* of these ideas (an accidental modification only) necessary? A third possibility, namely essential modification or abandonment of the so-called basic "principles" which give rise to insoluble problems, is dismissed as unthinkable: "without, however, abandoning basic principles."<sup>31</sup> Why not? If recently discovered facts seem to cast even the slightest shadow of doubt on these "basic principles", should not the true scientist immediately be willing to re-examine the evidence for those principles, or at least take into account the possibility of such a need? But perhaps these "principles" are so inviolable, so definitely established for all time, so self-evident, that a re-examination of them would be a waste of time. The only answer to such an attitude is to see what the "principles" in question are.

Fortunately Dr. Allers himself enumerates them for us. They are:

- (a) the principle of individuation by matter;
- (b) the immateriality of the intellect;
- (c) the origin of all knowledge in sense cognition;
- (d) the role of the active intellect and the genesis of universal ideas by abstraction.<sup>32</sup>

We agree with him that these principles are considered by many to be "fundamental to Thomistic philosophy". But this does not mean that all of them are fundamental to genuine and orthodox scholastic philosophy. No genuine scholastic, of course, would deny the second<sup>33</sup> (the immateriality of the intellect) but many have denied one or more of the other three. In any case, a denial of the "conversion to the phantasm" theory in no way

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96; Mortimer J. Adler adopts the same attitude in his Introduction to Brennan's *Thomistic Psychology* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. xi.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 95 and 129.

<sup>33</sup> Cfr., however, our remarks on "proving" this principle in n. 15 *supra*.

jeopardises the immateriality of the intellect, as we shall show later.

We also agree with Dr. Allers when he says that "if we are to retain them (these four principles) it behooves us to explain more clearly how the intellectual cognition of particulars takes place.<sup>34</sup> But if this implies that we *must* retain all of these principles in order to remain within the pale of scholasticism and orthodoxy we have to disagree with the eminent Professor. For some of the greatest scholastics themselves rejected one or more of them and remained no less scholastic and orthodox than St. Thomas. Not all of the scholastics agree on the role of the active intellect, for example. Some even deny that there is an active intellect.<sup>35</sup> The principle of individuation by matter was vehemently denied by Scotus and many others, even in the name of orthodoxy.<sup>36</sup> Ockham, of course, dismissed the whole problem by properly relocating the question of universals after having disengaged logic from the metaphysical accretions with which Porphyry had encumbered it. For Ockham there is no problem of individuation in this sense at all; the real problem is one of universalization:

Non est quaerenda aliqua causa individuationis . . . sed magis esset quaerenda causa, quomodo possibile est aliquod esse commune et universale.<sup>37</sup>

But even if this solution does not meet with approval, and we still persist in a search for a principle of individuation, let us remember the comment of the eminent seventeenth century Thomist, Philippus de Ss. Trinitate: *In hoc re quot capita, tot sensus*.<sup>38</sup> And with regard to St. Thomas' solution, let us re-

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>35</sup> Cfr. Grabmann, "Mittelalterliche Deutung und Umbildung der aristotelischen Lehre vom *nous poieticos*" in *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akad. d. Wiss. Phil. hist. Abteilung*. 1936, hft. 4.

<sup>36</sup> The idea that matter is the principle of individuation met with certain theological difficulties regarding the angels. Confer the enlightening remarks of Giles of Rome regarding the implications of the condemnations of Stephen Tempier in 1270. *Quodlibet* 2, q. 7, Venice, 1502, f. 14vb.

<sup>37</sup> Cfr. *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 6, L, Q.

<sup>38</sup> Cfr. the Scholion to St. Bonaventure's *II Sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, art. 2, q. 2 (Quaracchi ed., II, 107): problema, quod famosum est magis infinitis dis-



member the judgement of a modern expositor of the Angelic Doctor: "St. Thomas' doctrine of the principle of individuation by matter remains one of the weakest points in the whole Thomistic system. *All attempts to save it by later Thomists have failed.*"<sup>39</sup> And again: "when Aristotle (and St. Thomas) ascribed the principle of individuation to the same factor (matter) that is responsible for what is unreal and imperfect in the composite, he placed the individual in dangerous company and initiated a degradation of the individual."<sup>40</sup>

If these, then, are the "basic principles" involved, why must they be saved at any cost? Furthermore, if these principles give rise to an insoluble problem—a problem upon whose solution the whole Thomistic system is said to stand or fall<sup>41</sup>—is it not possible, at least, to suspect that something might be wrong with the "principles" themselves?

Upon examination it seems also that there is a particularly vicious circle involved in this whole discussion. The Thomistic theory of abstraction is intimately connected with the theory of matter and form, and both of these are inextricably linked up with the principle of individuation by matter. But, in a systematization, how are we to arrange these relations in a *logical* order? In other words, which came first—the "chicken" of abstraction or the "egg" of individuation by matter? Or was individuation by matter the "chicken" and abstraction the "egg"?

Let us call the theory of matter and form " $T_1$ ", the theory of individuation by matter " $T_2$ ", and the theory of abstraction " $T_3$ ". Is the logical relation which expresses the genesis of these theories  $T_1 \longrightarrow T_2 \longrightarrow T_3$  or is it  $T_1 \longrightarrow T_3 \longrightarrow T_2$ ?<sup>42</sup>

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putationibus quam evidenti solutione, cum recte dicat Philippus de SS. Trinitate in sua celebri Summa Philosophica, p. III, q. 5 in princ.: "In hac re quot capita, tot sensus."

<sup>39</sup> Hans Meyer, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Herder, 1944), p. 532.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73 (parentheses mine).

<sup>41</sup> This is Dr. Allers' judgment; cfr. reference in n. 16 *supra*.

<sup>42</sup> These are the two primary combinations with which we are concerned here. In any case, I think most Thomists would insist on placing  $T_1$  first,

I doubt whether this problem has received sufficient consideration, and consequently the followers of St. Thomas seem to have overlooked the implications involved in the question of the logical genesis of three of their most basic "principles". Let us therefore examine the two possible relations we have symbolized. Temporarily taking for granted the primacy of the matter and form theory, we wonder whether the Thomists establish  $T_2$  (individuation by matter) and then deduce  $T_3$  (theory of abstraction); or do they first establish  $T_3$  (theory of abstraction) and then deduce  $T_2$  (individuation by matter)?

Hans Meyer, without directly adverting to this problem, has this to say: "A number of factors—a certain parallellism between cognition and the order of being, the (acceptance of the) universal as a point of departure, matter as the principle of individuation—led to a *universale formale*, to an Aristotelian Platonism, which then indeed clearly peeps out of the Thomistic world of thought."<sup>43</sup> Since this *universale formale* is what is said to be grasped by the intellect in abstraction, and since one reason for postulating this *universale formale* is the principle of individuation by matter, it would seem that, according to Meyer, St. Thomas was guided by the  $T_2 \longrightarrow T_3$  relation.

But Meyer also remarks, in a different place: "In view of the plurality within the species, he (i.e., St. Thomas) asks for the reason of the individual and intends, through its determination, to arrive at both the numerical and the qualitative individuality. On the basis of this realism as regards universals, one cannot deny to St. Thomas a certain consequence. The character of species is derived from the form which is in itself universal. Therefore individuation comes from matter. Epistemological

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since potency and act are usually considered as the key to the Thomistic mansion of philosophy.

<sup>43</sup> This and the following quotation from Meyer are direct translations from the German edition of his work (*Thomas von Aquin. Sein System und seine geistesgeschichtliche Stellung*, Bonn: Hanstein, 1938). The English translation published by Herder (cfr. n. 2 *supra*) here, as in so many other places, is not accurate (cfr. review by Fr. Ph. Boehner in *Franciscan Studies* March, 1945, pp. 81-83). In the German original this passage occurs on p. 99; its equivalent in the English translation occurs on p. 85.

reasons, the Aristotelian doctrine of abstraction, lead to the same result. If the universal arises in the human intellect by precluding the sensible and material, then it seems that matter is responsible for the individual."<sup>44</sup> This seems to argue in favor of the  $T_1 \longrightarrow T_2$  relation!

So where does that leave us? The two relations we mentioned seem to be taken concomitantly and as somehow reflexive. In other words, the theory of abstraction seems to be derived from the theory of individuation by matter (in subordination, of course, to the theory of matter and form) and yet that same theory of abstraction is cited as evidence for the "principle" from which it was derived, namely, individuation by matter. From a logical point of view it is difficult to escape the conclusion that a certain *circulus in arguendo* has crept into the whole discussion.<sup>45</sup>

A similar suspicion of circularity arises when we consider the logical relation between the theory of matter and form and the theory of abstraction. No one can deny that St. Thomas' theory of abstraction is based on his conception of hylemorphism. But, as we saw with regard to the principle of individuation, psycho-

<sup>44</sup> Cfr. preceding note; pp. 87-8 in the German edition, p. 76 in the English version.

<sup>45</sup> In addition, note the conditional hypothetical nature of this line of reasoning: "If the universal . . . is obtained by precluding the sensible and material, then it seems that the material is responsible for the individual". In order to posit the consequence (as the Thomists do), the antecedent must also be posited. Now examine their reasons for affirming the antecedent. One of them is: The intellect is immaterial and therefore cannot have any direct knowledge of the material particular; therefore it can only know directly the universal form; the universal form is only obtainable if we disengage it from matter; therefore "the universal . . . is obtained by precluding the sensible and the material". Ignoring for the moment the unwarranted inclusion of the word "direct" (we shall refer to that later), let us merely note here that the premiss: "The universal form is only obtainable if we disengage it from matter", presupposes the consequent: "the material is responsible for the individual". Is that not equivalent to saying:—If A then B; but A, therefore B. *Proof of A: C, therefore D, therefore E. But F (because of B); therefore A!*



logical reasons again seem to have influenced Aquinas in developing ideas which are logically prior to his psychological theories. Specifically, psychological considerations seem to have influenced him when he attributed to "form" the specific character which makes the hylemorphic theory an integral part of the theory of abstraction. For, at the basis of the whole Thomistic theory of abstraction is the idea that only forms are intelligible. As we shall show, *these* forms are a relic of Plato's Ideas. But by what right are these forms identified with the forms of hylemorphism? Gilson says of the hylemorphic form that it is "a constitutive principle in virtue of which (a body) is what it is, and does what it does, without which we should have no means of apprehending it in itself as a being."<sup>46</sup> In addition, this principle must be considered as that part of a being which *defines* a body!<sup>47</sup> This is a clear indication, surely, of the influence of psychological theory (not to mention logic) on the theory of matter and form.

Then again we have the principle that "it is immateriality which confers intelligibility".<sup>48</sup> Is this the reason for attributing the special character to the hylemorphic form? If so, what is the evidence for this principle? How is it proved? It may well be, as St. Thomas remarks, that nothing corporeal can impress itself on an incorporeal thing.<sup>49</sup> But this does not imply that immateriality is therefore a necessary prerequisite for intellection. For it assumes that the intellect is entirely passive in its operation. If it is active, there seems to be no contradiction in admitting that the intellect can act on a corporeal or material thing. As a matter of fact, St. Thomas himself is led to this conclusion and therefore feels obliged to postulate an active intellect. Is then the origin of the principle "immateriality confers intelligibility" rather to be sought in the Thomistic conception of knowledge itself: "to know something is a manner

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<sup>46</sup> *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, p. 189.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*; see how logic has become mixed up with metaphysics and even physics.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>49</sup> *Summa Theol.* I, q. 84, a 6.

of becoming it"? <sup>50</sup> If so, we are again thrown back on the hylemorphic theory and its derivatives, potency and act. And at most this description of knowledge is metaphorical anyhow. It does not clarify things at all.

In addition, there is an epistemological problem involved which deserves attention. If, as Fr. Regis, O.P., seems to imply, neo-Thomism should refute Idealism, and not merely dismiss it as *ultra vires*,<sup>51</sup> how is the Thomist to proceed in this refutation of Idealism? Surely not by appealing to principles which are derived from an analysis of "facts" presented to us by sense-experience. How then? If he insists on a "metaphysical" explanation, and if *this* metaphysics is professedly based on sense-data,<sup>52</sup> how can he possibly avoid being involved in a *petitio principii*, since the principles to be invoked against Idealism are themselves deduced on an assumptive realistic basis? In other words, these principles assume at the outset precisely what Idealism calls into question, namely, the existence of extra-mental reality.

Several times already we have mentioned that there is an "axiom" in the Thomistic theory of knowledge which is usually accepted without question but which actually is of very doubtful value. In its broadest formulation it runs as follows: "*Intellectus est universalium, sensus autem particularium*". In our comments to Professor Allers' outline of the Thomistic theory of cognition we had occasion to point out the intimate connection between this "axiom" and certain basic "principles" of Thomism, such as individuation by matter, hylemorphism, realism with regard to the problem of universals, and so forth.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Cfr. E. Gilson, *loc. cit.*, p. 263; this formula, of course, is not St. Thomas' own, but that of John of St. Thomas (as Gilson points out in n. 3, p. 277).

<sup>51</sup> Cfr. n. 6 *supra*.

<sup>52</sup> Cfr. Vernon J. Bourke, "Experience of Extra-mental Reality as the Starting Point of St. Thomas' Metaphysics", *Proc. Amer. Cath. Philos. Assoc.* XIV (1938), p. 134.

<sup>53</sup> Cfr. our comments to Propositions 3 and 5 in our analysis of Professor Allers' account of the Thomistic theory of knowledge.



Here we might also mention that this "axiom" is the point of departure between the Thomists and those who hold for intuitive cognition. For the Thomists assert that it expresses the essential difference between intellectual and sensitive operations, forgetting that a criterion of difference is not necessarily the difference itself. Now if later scholastics assert that the intellect as well as sense can know material particulars directly and immediately (as the proponents of intuitive cognition hold) an obvious retort of the Thomists would be: But we have shown that the intellect *cannot* know particulars directly. It is clear that the cogency of such a retort depends on the validity of their proof for the statement: *Intellectus noster directe non est cognoscitivus nisi universalium*. The connection between this proposition and the axiom we are discussing is obvious—perhaps too obvious, for it seems that the acceptance of the qualified proposition (*intellectus noster directe non est cognoscitivus nisi universalium*) is taken as proof for the axiom (*intellectus est universalium, sensus autem particularium*). Actually we must distinguish carefully between these two formulations. The "axiom" is true in one sense, because our intellect does know universals—i.e., it constructs universal concepts. In another sense, however, it is false, namely, in the sense that our intellects can *only* know universals. And it is in this false sense that it is equated with the proposition: *Intellectus noster directe non est cognoscitivus nisi universalium*. Let us therefore examine the Thomistic proof for this second sense of the "axiom".

Such a proof is given in the *Summa Theologica*:<sup>54</sup> Our intellect cannot know the singular in material things directly and primarily. The reason of this is that the principle of singularity in material things is individual matter, whereas our intellect, as we have said above, understands by abstracting the intelligible species from such matter. Now

<sup>54</sup> Cfr. *Summa Theol.* I, q. 86, a. 1: Dicendum quod singulare in rebus materialibus intellectus noster directe et primo cognoscere non potest. Cuius ratio est, quia principium singularitatis in rebus materialibus est materia individualis, intellectus autem noster, sicut supra dictum est, intelligit abstrahendo speciem intelligibilem ab huiusmodi materia. Quod autem a materia individuali abstrahitur, est universale. Unde intellectus noster directe non est cognoscitivus nisi universalium.

what is abstracted from individual matter is the universal. Hence our intellect knows directly the universal only.<sup>55</sup>

Let us break this text down into propositions with a view to discovering its formal logical structure:—

1. *Conclusion to be proved*: Our intellect cannot know the singular in material things directly and primarily;

2. *because* the principle of singularity in material things is matter;

3. *but* our intellect understands by abstracting the intelligible species from such matter,

4. *and* what is abstracted from individual matter is the universal.

5. *Therefore*, our intellect knows directly the universal only (*intellectus noster directe non est cognoscitivus nisi universalium*).

In the first place, on the basis of 3 and 4 there seems to be no logical justification for the qualification "directly" in 5; *a fortiori* there is no justification for the double qualification "directly and primarily" in 1. Nor is there any justification for the qualification "only" in 5, unless "only" is *expressly* understood in 3 (i.e., unless 3 be revised to read: "our intellect understands *only* by abstracting the intelligible species from such matter"). This would make 3 a formulation of exclusive abstractionism and equivalent to a universal negative proposition, to falsify which only one contrary fact is necessary. That contrary fact is the evident and provable fact of intuitive intellectual cognition, as we shall show.

Actually, however, the above argument as it stands proves either nothing of consequence or too much. For the logical conclusion to be derived from the premisses as stated would be: "Our intellect knows the universal." While if proposition 3 were revised to read: "Our intellect understands *only* by abstracting the intelligible species from such matter", the conclusion would be: "Our intellect knows the universal *only*". Therefore, to hold that the theory of abstraction represents the *only* ex-

<sup>55</sup> English translation of the *Summa* by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Burnes Oates & Washbourne, London, 1922).

planation of intellectual cognition is to exclude the possibility of intellectual cognition of particulars *entirely*. And to admit that our intellect knows material particulars even indirectly is a denial of the premiss which states that our intellect knows only by abstraction. In other words, if we admit that we can know material particulars at all, we must admit that the theory of abstraction is not an adequate explanation of our intellectual cognition.

Thus the "axiom": *Intellectus est univerealium, sensus autem particularium* becomes destructive of the theory of abstraction if reduced to the formulation: *Intellectus noster directe non est cognoscitivus nisi universalium*.

It also appears that this latter formulation is really only an assumption which we have shown, to be based on another assumption, namely, that the intelligible in things is a common nature. If so, to try and prove that "*intellectus directe non est cognoscitivus nisi universalium*" by appealing to the theory of abstraction is a *petitio principii*. For the process of abstraction is merely a theory to explain how the intelligible in things (a common nature, by assumption) is derived from material particulars. To bring out this objection more clearly, let us call the first assumption (that the intelligible in things is a common nature) " $A_1$ "; let us call the second, or derived, assumption (*intellectus noster directe non est cognoscitivus nisi universalium*) " $A_2$ "; and let us call the theory of abstraction " $T$ ". Now logically " $A_2$ " is dependent on " $A_1$ "—i.e.,  $A_1 \longrightarrow A_2$ . But a combination of these two is assumed by the theory of abstraction—i.e.,  $(A_1 \text{ and } A_2) \longrightarrow T$ . Therefore, to argue that  $T$  proves  $A_2$  is obviously circular, since  $A_2$  is a premiss in the derivation of  $T$ .

One can only wonder whether there is any way out of this logical maze. Now that the problem has been raised, perhaps some student of St. Thomas will be able to state clearly the *logical* connection between the "principles" and "axioms" we have considered in this brief analysis. In the meantime, the uninitiated must confess that he does not see his way clearly at all. He can hardly escape the conclusion that there is no systematical



development in the strict sense, that most of these fundamental "principles" and "axioms" are merely the result of some kind of "co-intuition". But even if neo-scholastics are forced to fall back on "co-intuition" as an explanation there is still a lot of systematization to be done. Once and for all it should be made very clear that these principles and axioms are known only by co-intuition; and, if they cannot be proved, they should be listed under their true name, which is "fundamental assumptions". As matters stand nowadays it is almost impossible to distinguish between what should or can be proved in the theory of abstraction and what can only be accepted on the basis of some fundamental metaphysical "intuition".

If this lack of systematization is an oversight in St. Thomas (as it certainly seems to be in most of his modern disciples, despite the apparent systematization in those who adopt Christian Wolff's division of philosophy) the historical reasons for such an oversight are easy to find. We have already indicated what we believe to be the main historical reasons.<sup>56</sup> Let us now consider the systematical significance of these facts.

From a systematical point of view it seems that the difficulty of systematizing the Thomistic theory of cognition arises from the realistic position adopted in regard to the problem of universals. As soon as it is assumed that (a) universals *only* are the proper object of the intellect and (b) that these universals are somehow residing in things, the problem arises of how we can liberate these universals in order to know them. Now since these assumptions are derived from an interpretation of Aristotle which disregards his development, as we have shown, it seems feasible to expect that a proper interpretation of Aristotle may lead to a reconsideration of the problem of universals. The researches of Werner Jaeger provide a new starting point for such a reconsideration.<sup>57</sup> An application of his conclusions would re-

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<sup>56</sup> Cfr. the first section of the present chapter.

<sup>57</sup> Cfr. especially *op. cit.* n. 1 *supra*; also his *Studien zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Metaphysik des Aristoteles* (Berlin, 1912). These studies are supplemented and complemented by the works of Harold Cherniss—for example *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1944); at the present date, only one of the projected two volumes of this work has appeared.



volutionize the current interpretations not only of St. Thomas but also of all the great scholastics who adopted Aristotelian Realism either in whole or in part. Though such a study has not yet appeared (for neo-scholastics seem to ignore the significance of Jaeger's work for the most part), some of its most probable conclusions might be indicated as follows:

1. Many of the fundamental "metaphysical principles" of Aristotelianism would be revealed in their true colors as essentially Platonic in spirit and origin. This is not bad in itself; but it is ironical, in view of the fact that some neo-Thomists apparently consider that an opponent is refuted and discredited by the simple assertion that he writes under the influence of Platonism.<sup>58</sup>

2. Specifically, it would be made apparent that Aristotle took over Plato's much criticized Ideas and retained them in a different setting. Aristotle emphasized the significance of the Ideas as essences or elements of reality, but since he denied their separate subsistence he had to relocate them. This he did by postulating "common natures" in individuals of a species—and hence the problem of individuation arose.

3. But this relocation of the Ideas did not change their essential character as "universals". For Plato the Ideas were

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<sup>58</sup> This fallacious use of the *argumentum ad hominem* has been noted and deprecated by J. R. Cresswell, "Recent American Scholasticism", *Progress of Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies in the United States and Canada*, Bulletin No. 17 (Boulder, Colorado, 1942), p. 18; and more recently by E. A. Moody, "Professor Pegis and Historical Philosophy", *Franciscan Studies* XXVI (New Series vol. 5, 1945), 301-308. Dr. Moody mentions a "somewhat extreme" example of this form of argument as represented in Dr. Pegis' "picture of the rescue of Christian thought, by an Aristotle purified of every hint of Platonism, from the dangers introduced into it by St. Augustine" (p. 304). Dr. Moody is guilty of an understatement when he calls this "somewhat extreme". For Dr. Pegis writes: "An anti-Platonic Aristotle . . . was a veritable defender of Christian thought at the point of its greatest vulnerability, the age-old Platonism of St. Augustine and Boethius"! (cfr. *The Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, edited and annotated with an Introduction by Anton C. Pegis, New York: Random House, 1945, p. xliii). This would still be an amazing statement even if there were such a thing as the kind of "anti-Platonic Aristotle" which Professor Pegis believes in.

the proper object of the *nous*. Aristotle retained the *nous*, and likewise retained the Ideas as its proper object. But since the Ideas were now relocated in material particulars, the *nous* had to disengage them from their material trappings. Hence a process had to be devised whereby this dematerialization could be effected. This process is described in the theory of abstraction. Instead of the vision of Ideas or the remembrance of Ideas as postulated by Plato, Aristotle has the *abstraction* of Ideas, with all its concomitant difficulties.<sup>59</sup>

4. Therefore, to understand Aristotle and all his mediaeval disciples, we should realize that (as Jaeger has pointed out) this concept of abstraction took possession of Aristotle's entire thinking. Hence we should "examine the first appearance of the abstract and its gradual emergence in Greek thought".<sup>60</sup> Only then might we gain the correct historical perspective that would enable us to approach the major problems of scholastic Aristotelianism in a new and unprejudiced light. Only then might it be possible to detect in their true colors the assumptions which are basic to the whole Aristotelian metaphysics.

5. Finally, an application of Professor Jaeger's conclusions to scholastic Aristotelianism would throw a great deal of light on the obscure Physics of naive Realism which is strenuously defended as the only real basis for metaphysics. For example, we have referred above to the intimate and confusing connection between the theory of abstraction (professedly a metaphysical explanation of cognition)<sup>61</sup> and the theory of matter and form. Tempting though the prospect is, this is no place for a critical evaluation of hylomorphism. It must be admitted that it cannot be *disproved*. But this is no guarantee of its validity. In this connection we should like to quote Hans Meyer again, as representative of a growing spirit of criticism even within the neo-Thomistic ranks: "Matter and form are really the product

<sup>59</sup> Cfr. Jaeger, *op. cit.* n. 1 *supra*, p. 370.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Cfr., for example, Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Herder, 1941), p. 251; R. Allers in the Preface to Brennan's *General Psychology* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), etc.

of an illegitimate conclusion from art to nature; they are the result of an exaggerated belief in the parallelism between thought and being."<sup>62</sup> As a result of this "exaggerated belief" (which is another name for naive Realism), "the separate elements found in the logical proposition became *real* components of the individual thing."<sup>63</sup>

These observations, necessarily fragmentary, are indicative of our reasons for insisting on a sincere and critical consideration of the third possibility which Dr. Allers ignores, namely, a re-examination of some of the basic "principles" of the Thomistic theory of intellectual cognition. It would be beyond the scope of the present chapter to elaborate on the reasons we have indicated as suggesting that some of the principles listed by Dr. Allers are, if not untenable, at least not established in a manner which would warrant their retention without further examination in the light of the severe and discerning criticism levelled against them—not only today but also in the golden age of scholasticism itself.

An entire book might easily be written about any one of the problems we have mentioned, and still we should not be any nearer to a solution of the whole problem. Let us therefore try to draw one modest conclusion from all of the foregoing—a conclusion which may liberate us from the necessity of being forever condemned to rehash old problems in an old setting: If the theory of matter and form and the principle of individuation by matter and the theory of abstraction are *possibly* untenable for the reasons we have suggested (and for many others not even hinted at), it follows that theories which flow from these *possibly* untenable premisses have to be critically examined also. We do not make the logical blunder of saying that the conclusion is necessarily false because the premisses are false. We do not even go so far as to say that the premisses are demonstrably false.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Op. cit.*, note 2 *supra*, p. 70.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>64</sup> It should be noted that the theory of abstraction can never be verified by experiments either. At most, experiments can only present facts which may strengthen the hypothesis that our intellects function as claimed by



We simply demand (a) more cogent arguments than we have at present for accepting the premisses, or (b) new premisses.

With regard to the problem of our intellectual cognition of material particulars, we have shown that the principles cited by the Thomists do not guarantee their conclusions. We have also shown that there are many difficulties and unsolved problems in their whole theory of cognition. In particular, we have given reasons to show that many of the most fundamental "principles" in this theory are not satisfactorily established and, in some cases, would even appear to be unfounded assumptions. Therefore we are not obliged at present to accept the conclusions which flow from these principles. Specifically, there is no evidence, metaphysical or empirical, for stating that the intellect can *only* know material particulars *indirectly*. Hence, if experiential evidence seems to indicate that we know them *directly*, we are not only justified, but even obliged, to investigate the scientific possibilities inherent in adopting this as a new starting point, at least as a hypothesis.

It should be noted that, in itself, the question whether we know material particulars directly or indirectly is of little importance. Its importance lies in what it implies. And to Dr. Allers goes the credit for realizing these implications. As we pointed out in the beginning of this section, Dr. Allers considers it as a problem upon whose solution the whole Thomistic system will stand or fall. We consider it important (a) *from a historical point of view*, because it was instrumental in initiating the reaction against the over-emphasis placed on Aristotelian theories in the thirteenth century, thus providing a stimulus for the more critical investigations of the fourteenth;<sup>65</sup> (b) *from a systematical*

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the proponents of the theory of abstraction. Nor is there any introspective awareness of the process of abstraction. Therefore there is no *direct* verification of the theory of abstraction. On empirical grounds, then, the only possibility left open is a falsification of the hypothesis. And this falsification is given if we can establish the fact of intuitive cognition (at least the hypothesis of exclusive abstractionism is falsified in this case —i.e., the hypothesis that *all* intellectual knowledge is conceptual.

<sup>65</sup> This argues already for a more sympathetic and positive approach to later scholasticism. Perhaps, after all, the historians have been wrong



*point of view*, because the hypothesis that the intellect can know material particulars directly provides a starting point for a real science of metaphysics, and has far-reaching consequences in epistemology and psychology, as we shall see later.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

To approach the question from another angle, we might say that, if it can be shown that the intellect does know material particulars *directly*, the problem of how we know them *indirectly* is really a pseudo-problem.<sup>66</sup> This was the solution of later

in dismissing it as a period of decline and decadence. It was certainly a period of criticism, but it looks as though a refining critique was necessary.

<sup>66</sup> Incidentally, this is the solution of Fr. G. Smith, S.J., when he eliminates the "*intellectus est universalium, sensus autem particularium*" axiom altogether. He writes: "Let us agree that 'properly speaking neither sense nor intellect knows, but man knows by both together' (he cites St. Thomas, *De Veritate*, q. 2, a. 6). If we agree to that, we need not concern ourselves with the difficulty that the intellect alone cannot know existents since its object is quiddity, and sensible quiddity may or may not exist. Nor need we concern ourselves with the like difficulty, that sense knows only *sensibilia propria* or *communia*, and these are not existence . . . Putting sense and intellect together in human knowledge from the beginning we have made it impossible to ask how to relate the two . . . This is nonsense, a dead end" (cfr. "A Date in the History of Epistemology", *The Thomist—The Maritain Volume* [V, 1943], pp. 249-250). Though based on a text from St. Thomas, this solution plays havoc with many Thomistic principles—e.g., the real distinction between faculties. And if Fr. Smith has "made it impossible" to ask how to relate sense cognition and intellectual cognition, the fact remains that St. Thomas asked that question, at least implicitly, when he felt that it was necessary to postulate a *species* and an active intellect—when he found it difficult to say how we become cognizant of material particulars—when he felt, as Professor Allers says, that there was "an unbridgeable gap" between matter and the spiritual intellect. And now Prof. Pegis comes on the scene and insists that this "unbridgeable gap" is essentially the Platonism of Ockham! He is right in saying that it is Platonic, but neither this Platonism nor this gap is to be found in Ockham. On the contrary, Ockham starts out by showing that there is *no* gap—that material singulars are known *directly* in intuitive cognition. Again, most Thomists believe that the process of abstraction strips "the contents of sense of their material aspects by revealing the naked nature that lies underneath" (Cfr. R. E. Brennan, O.P., *General Psychology*, Macmillan, 1937, p. 327).

scholastics. An examination of their discussions on this point should therefore be well worthwhile.

It should be noted that, even if the ability to form universal concepts or abstract ideas be taken as the criterion of intelligence, it does not follow that the intellect is incapable of any other kind of thinking. So to recognize an intellectual knowledge prior to the formation of a concept is not a denial of this criterion of intelligence.

Now the Thomists classify intellectual acts as follows: (1) Concept; (2) Judgement; (3) Inference.<sup>67</sup> Other scholastics, however, offer another classification of intellectual acts: (1) Immediate or direct intellectual apprehension of singulars (even of material singulars, but then in dependence on the senses) as actually existing and as present to the observer, *and* an immediate apprehension of particulars which abstracts from the existence and presence of the thing known; (2) Formation of concepts; (3) Judgement; (4) Inference, etc. In other words, the Thomists seem to equate the formation of concepts (by abstraction) with simple intellectual apprehension. Other scholastics recognize two acts on the level of simple apprehension *prior* to the formation of concepts. These two acts are called acts of intuitive and abstractive cognition. The formation of concepts is then recognized as being on a different level from that of simple apprehension. This new classification made it possible to eliminate many of the difficulties we have discussed in the preceding pages. And, as it evolved, this new classification revealed in their true colors many of the metaphysical assumptions

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But Dr. Pegis insists that this is not the teaching of St. Thomas at all, but the Platonism of Henry of Ghent which reifies thought "by postulating, however fugitively, a world of essences which human thought is somehow or other capable of liberating (or is it producing?) within reality"; (cfr. "Concerning William of Ockham," *Traditio* II, p. 479). In the light of these startling observations it would certainly be interesting to hear Professor Pegis' account of St. Thomas' theory of cognition, especially his theory of abstraction. We mention these differences of opinion (all fundamental and all put forward in the name of St. Thomas) as further reasons why we hesitate to say what St. Thomas himself taught.

<sup>67</sup> Cfr. R. E. Brennan, *General Psychology*, p. 324.

that are responsible for the difficulties in the old classification. This revelation makes it possible for us to give a *systematic* account of scholastic philosophy, even if the scholastics themselves did not leave such an account of it; and it paved the way for a clear description of the process of knowledge in place of the metaphysical speculations about knowledge that we have found to be so unsatisfactory.

As an introduction to a study of these contributions made by later scholastics we shall now examine in some detail (a) Scotus' attempt to formulate the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition (which is the basis of the new classification of intellectual acts), and (b) Ockham's attempt to develop Scotus' ideas and assimilate them into some sort of a system.

Scotus, of course, did not invent the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition. Nor did Ockham perfect it. But they are outstanding representatives of the numerous scholastics who adopted this distinction. And, at the present time, no better representatives could be chosen to introduce the reader to the real meaning of the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition, and the results of its adoption in scholastic philosophy.

## PART II

### HISTORICAL

For our study . . . it is necessary, while formulating the problems of which in our further advance we are to find the solutions, to call into council the views of those of our predecessors who have declared any opinion on this subject, in order that we may profit by whatever is sound in their suggestions and avoid their errors.

ARISTOTLE, *De Anima*, Bk. I, ch. 2.





## CHAPTER 2

### DUNS SCOTUS

#### A. NOTE ON METHOD

If philosophy undertakes to give a rational explanation of reality, the first task of natural reason should be to guarantee a safe basis for its reasoning. Scotus was keenly aware of this methodological necessity. But too many of his commentators and expositors have overlooked his insistence on this point and hence have failed to grasp the significance of his teaching on intuitive cognition. For it is precisely in his discussions of this problem that Scotus develops his doctrine of immediate experience as the basis for certitude.

Even some of the early Scotistic commentators were confused regarding certain aspects of Scotus' teaching on intuitive cognition, as we shall see later.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the reason for this can be found in the following facts: Aristotle had presented the Middle Ages with a *speculative* theory of cognition which has to be understood within the framework of his *Metaphysics* and *Physics*, and in the light of his own complex relations with the teachings of Plato. Scotus, like most of his contemporaries, adopted this theory of cognition. Yet there is definite evidence in his works of a tendency to break away from speculative theorizing about cognition in favor of a descriptive analysis of cognitive processes. It is only a tendency, however, and most of the Aristotelian framework is retained. Whether this would have been eliminated had Scotus lived longer is a question that must remain unanswered. The fact is that it was not eliminated. So those of

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. also the following testimony of Mairius: "De cognitione intuitiva et abstractiva . . . inter alias cognitionis nostrae divisiones haec est famosior, et frequentissima; in hac quaestione accuratissime est examinanda, cum in eius explicatione *Doctores non conveniant, immo nec ipsi Scotistae* (*Cursus Philosophicus*, In de Anima, Disp. 6, q. xi; Tom. III, p. 204, col. a).

his commentators who wished to remain strict Scotists without sacrificing their Aristotelian orthodoxy were faced with the difficulty of reconciling the two aspects of Scotus' psychological doctrine. Francis Lychetus is one who saw the problem but was not successful in his attempts to solve it, chiefly because of his devotion to Aristotle. This devotion even led him to the point of sacrificing Scotus that Aristotle might be saved (cfr. *infra* our discussion regarding the incompatibility of the "*species* theory" and the doctrine of intuitive cognition). On the other hand, Cardinal Vital de Four (author of the *De Rerum Principio* falsely attributed to Scotus) is typical of a spirit which more willingly sacrifices Aristotle in order to develop the traditional Franciscan ideas to their logical conclusion. But the problem of reconciling these two tendencies always remained to confuse the issue, and nobody seems to have realized that the only solution was to admit that a real reconciliation was impossible.

The little that has been written in modern times about Scotus' doctrine on intuitive cognition confuses more than it enlightens the reader. For example, the valuable work of Fr. Parthenius Minges and Fr. Déodat-M. de Basly in this regard needs correction because both of these authors relied overmuch on tracts that have since been proven spurious or of doubtful authenticity.<sup>2</sup>

And the protracted discussions of Belmond, Veuthey, Déodat de Basly and Hohmann, though avoiding this source of error, complicated the issue by introducing many serious misinterpretations of Scotus' teaching.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cfr. Minges, P., *Johannis Duns Scoti Doctrina Philosophica et Theologica* (Quaracchi, 1930; 2 vols.) and de Basly, Deodat M., *Capitalia Opera B. J. Duns Scoti* (Le Havre, 1908), both of whom rely extensively on the spurious *De Rerum Principio* (written by Vital de Four) and the dubious *De Anima*.

<sup>3</sup> These discussions began when Fr. Leon Veuthey, O.F.M. Conv., wrote his "L'école franciscaine et la critique philosophique moderne" in *Etudes Franciscaines* XLVIII (1936), 129-143; 257-266. Fr. Veuthey's ideas on what Scotus taught about intuitive cognition were largely based on an article by Fr. S. Belmond, O.F.M., "Essai sur la théorie de la connaissance d'après Jean Duns Scot", *La France Franciscaine* XVIII (1935), 5-32; 197-234. Fr. Déodat de Basly, O.F.M., attacked Fr. Veuthey's

In a lesser degree, the same can be said for the articles of Longpré and Shircel.<sup>4</sup>

Detailed comment on the Belmont-Veuthey discussion would lead us too far afield. However, as evidence for our contention that a critical re-examination of original sources is necessary, we may be permitted to cite the following: Fr. Belmont (who, in-

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article in "L'intuition de l'extramental matériel", *Etudes Franc.* XLVIII (1936), 267-279, to which Fr. Veuthey replied with "L'intuition scotiste et le sens du concret" (*Etudes Franc.* XLIX, 76-91). Then Fr. Belmont published "Le scotisme philosophique manque-t-il cohérence?" (*ibid.*, 178-188). This article had been written at the request of the editors of *Etudes Franciscaines* after the publication of Fr. Veuthey's first article, but was not published until after Fr. Veuthey's second article in answer to Fr. Déodat de Basly. Through no fault of Fr. Belmont, therefore, his article was not entirely *au courant* with the turn the discussion had taken by the time his article was published. Veuthey replied with "Cohérence: éclectisme ou synthèse" (*ibid.*, 324-332). Belmont withdrew from the discussion in a note to another article in *Etudes Franciscaines* (XLIX, 650), saying that he no longer considered Fr. Veuthey's views opposed to his own. From the article of Fr. Déodat de Basly on, the discussion had more or less wandered off the track. Veuthey's original contention had been that there was a contradiction in Scotus because of his attempt to reconcile irreconcilable Augustinian and Aristotelian elements in his philosophical synthesis. Fr. Déodat de Basly's and Fr. Belmont's discussions had concentrated more on one aspect of this, namely, Veuthey's interpretation of Scotus' teaching on intuitive cognition of singulars. In *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* IV (1937), 131-140, Hohmann restated the original question with his "Ist Duns Scotus Augustinist oder Aristoteliker?", to which Veuthey replied with "Augustinismus und Aristotelismus" (*ibid.*, 211-215). With this aspect of the discussion we are not concerned here. We are concerned, however, with the widely divergent expositions of Scotus' teaching on intuitive cognition that grew out of this discussion—not only because of the misconceptions we mentioned, but also because concentration on isolated details has tended to obscure the wider significance of the doctrine of intuitive cognition in Scotus and his successors.

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. E. Longpré, O.F.M., "The Psychology of Duns Scotus and its Modernity", *Franciscan Educational Conference* XIII (1931), 19-77; C. Shircel, O.F.M., *The Univocity of the Concept of Being in the Philosophy of John Duns Scotus* (The Cath. Univ. of America Philosophical Studies, Vol. LXVII, 1942), 64-68, and "The case for Intuitive Knowledge", *The Modern Schoolman* XXII (1945), 222-229; also C. Shircel, "Abstractive and Intuitive Knowledge in Relation to Being", *Proc. Amer. Cath. Phil. Assoc.* XIX (1943), pp. 136-156.



cidentally, quotes the *De Anima*) builds up a fine theory of intuition of the *abstract* on the basis of a misquoted text. Scotus says that intuitive cognition is *not* distinguished from abstractive cognition by reason of a lack of discursive reasoning in the former; for neither abstractive nor intuitive cognition is discursive. Fr. Belmond quotes Scotus as saying: *Prout intuitiva distinguitur contra discursivam, sic aliqua abstractiva esset intuitiva*. Actually Scotus says something entirely different: *Voco cognitionem intuitivam NON prout intuitiva distinguitur contra discursivam, QUIA sic aliqua abstractiva esset intuitiva*.<sup>5</sup> The intuition of the abstract which Fr. Belmond wishes off on Scotus as a result of this mutilation of a key text is then made out to be the "opération qui est au point de départ de l'intellection proprement dite",<sup>6</sup> and "the abstract" is then considered as the proper object of intuitive cognition. Nothing could be further from Scotus' real teaching. Hence Fr. Belmond misses entirely the connection between intuitive cognition, knowledge of existents, and certitude.

Fr. Veuthey follows Belmond too closely as regards this initial misapprehension, though he professes to disagree with him on consequences which flow therefrom.<sup>7</sup> This leads him to state that

<sup>5</sup> Cfr. Belmond: "Essai sur la théorie de la connaissance d'après Jean Duns Scot", *La France Franciscaine* XVIII, p. 19, and Scotus *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9, n. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Fr. Veuthey says that Fr. Belmond's conception of the intuition of the abstract is irreconcilable with the Augustinian spirit—would, indeed have appeared as monstrous to St. Augustine (cfr. "L'école franciscaine et la critique philosophique moderne", *Etudes Franciscaines* XLVIII, 258). May we add, it would have appeared as monstrous to Scotus also. That is where Fr. Veuthey made his initial mistake: he took Fr. Belmond's account on the intuition of the abstract as a correct exposition of Scotus's doctrine. But Veuthey is right when he takes Belmond up on another point. Belmond had said: "L'intuition du concret n'est pas l'intellection" (*op. cit.*, p. 79). Veuthey answers: "Oui, elle n'est pas l'intellection *conceptuelle*; mais dire qu'il n'y a point d'intellection hors de l'abstraction conceptuelle, c'est nier que l'intellection soit, par nature, intuitive; c'est donc nier à Dieu lui-même la faculté d'intuition immédiate . . . c'est faire de l'intellection divine elle-même une intellection discursive" (*loc. cit. supra*, p. 259).

simple apprehension is an abstraction and a discursive cognition, and not an intuition.<sup>8</sup> Scotus says the very opposite, not once but many times (cfr. texts cited *infra*). If Veuthey and Belmond were misled on such fundamental points as these, it is small wonder that the rest of their discussion is utterly confusing. The confusion which Veuthey finds in Scotus (inability to harmonize "Augustinian" and Aristotelian elements) is really a confusion of Veuthey's own making. Fr. Déodat-M. de Basly shows this clearly in his reply to Fr. Veuthey. But Fr. Déodat himself makes the initial mistake of defining "intuition" and "intuitive" in a modern and definitely un-Scotistic sense, so that his article too needs amplification and correction.<sup>9</sup>

The main bone of contention in the whole discussion is our cognition of singulars. Fr. Veuthey says that he never denied that Scotus taught that we do know singulars intuitively; but he does say that the singular in question is "the abstract". This, of course, again goes back to Fr. Belmond's original corruption of the text of *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9, n. 6. But a new twist is given to the fundamental missapprehension by Fr. Veuthey's assertion that a *species specialissima* is a *species intelligibilis*!<sup>10</sup>

In view of these circumstances, an extensive and critical reappraisal of original sources seems called for. It is a tedious job both for the reader and the writer of this chapter, but one which must be faced—unless we are to see "confusion worse confounded".

We have therefore chosen to begin this study of Scotus' teaching on intuitive cognition by carefully analysing two key-texts in the *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*. This procedure was dictated by the following considerations:

It is comparatively easy for the historian of philosophy to construct a particular point of doctrine and refer it to some

<sup>8</sup> "La simple apprehension elle-meme, qui est une abstraction et non une intuition, est une connaissance discursive" (*ibid.*, p. 260); this opinion also is attributed to Belmond.

<sup>9</sup> Cfr. *op. cit.*, p. 267, where these basic definitions are formulated according to Littré.

<sup>10</sup> *Loc. cit.*

historical figure, by collecting texts more or less at random from the works of a given author and arranging them (a) either haphazardly or (b) according to some preconceived plan of his own. But this "cross-reference-card-index" system of writing the history of philosophy, however spectacular it may be and however many devotees it may have, is simply not historical. For it can result only in one of two things: (a) either a meaningless composite of texts or (b) propaganda. In both cases we are presented with a purely personal construction, and, in the second instance, this personal construction is a refashioning of historical reality so as to make it accord with the pattern of the so-called historian's own views.<sup>11</sup>

The task of the historian of philosophy is not to construct but to re-construct—to re-present as faithfully as possible the mind of the author he is expounding. His own personal views should not be allowed to color the thought of the object of his study. He should try not to read into a single word any more or any less than was intended by the man who wrote it. His job is the often thankless one of ferreting out facts. In a word, the history of philosophy, like all history, must be primarily a record of facts and not merely an instrument for illustrating one's own pet theses. Above all, the historian of philosophy must be on his guard if he feels that it is necessary to give a systematical presentation of an author's thought when the author himself has not left any systematical exposition of a certain point or if he has not left as complete a systematization as is desired.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Cfr. Professor E. J. Moody's excoriation of this method of writing the history of philosophy in "Professor Pegis and Historical Philosophy", *Franciscan Studies* XXVI (New Series vol. 5, 1945), 301-308.

<sup>12</sup> These considerations may seem to be fundamental, and therefore uncalled for here. But the history of philosophy (even of Scotistic philosophy) is still being written "in the light of" this or that—as though any kind of history can be written in the light of anything except historical facts. Perhaps this unfortunate methodology is a direct legacy from the "first historian of philosophy", Aristotle, who sketched the development of Philosophy from Thales to Plato (in the First Book of the *Metaphysics*) with the purpose of giving a historical background to the four principles



If the chronological sequence of an author's writings is known, the task of the historian is comparatively simple. If it is not known, his task is well-nigh impossible, especially if there are contradictions (apparent or real) in the writings of the author to be studied. Scotus falls under this second head. Very little is known with certitude about the order in which his works were written. Most of them were left in an unfinished condition, because his sudden death prevented him from reducing to a definite order the numerous additions, corrections and cancellations that he was constantly making—sometimes in the margin of his manuscripts, sometimes in special notebooks, and sometimes even on separate slips of vellum.<sup>13</sup>

How is the historian to proceed in a case like this? Until we have definite information (idle or ill-founded speculation about the chronological sequence of an author's writings does not help)<sup>14</sup> the safest course seems to be this: Let us choose one or two key-texts in which the author gives a more or less *ex professo* treatment of the doctrine we are interested in, and let us then interpret other references in the light of these key-texts. If possible, these key-texts should be chosen from a work which can be dated with some degree of accuracy. Obviously, the later the work thus dated, the safer it will be as evidence of the author's more mature thought. This procedure allows of an organic de-

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on which Aristotle himself based metaphysics. As Jaeger says (*Aristotle, Fundamentals of the History of his Development*, transl. by Richard Robinson, Oxford, 1934, pp. 401-2), this famous historical sketch is not historical at all, but systematic: "it compresses and distorts the facts for the sake of what he wishes to extract from them". In this sense there are many good Aristotelians at work today. It is to offset their labors that we lay down the present "fundamental" considerations.

<sup>13</sup> Cfr. the *Annuae Relationes Commissionis Scotisticae* and C. Balic, O.F.M., "De Critica Textuali Scholasticorum scriptis accomodata", *Antonianum* (Miscellanea Historica P. Livario Oliger . . . oblata), 1945, pp. 267-308.

<sup>14</sup> Cfr., for example, our remarks on Fr. Muller's attempts to date the *De Primo Principio* of Scotus: "Ioannis Duns Scoti Tractatus de Primo Principio", *Franciscan Studies* Vol. 6 (1946), 226-230.

velopment which may parallel and may even reveal the development of doctrine in the original author's mind.<sup>15</sup>

A completely successful application of this method, of course, presupposes *some* knowledge of the chronological sequence in an author's writings. Though, as we have pointed out, we know very little in this regard concerning the works of Scotus, we are fortunate in being able to determine the approximate date of composition of what is almost certainly his latest completed work, namely, the *Quodlibeta*. Our only safe procedure, then, would seem to be to select our key-texts from this work and use them as a basis for the interpretation of *passim* references in other places. In this way we at least make allowance for a possible development of ideas in Scotus' mind, though the course of that development cannot be traced fully and accurately until further research provides us with a more complete knowledge of the chronology of Scotus' writings.

As a further means of preserving and revealing, if possible, this organic development of ideas in Scotus' teaching, we shall expound his doctrine on intuitive cognition in the following manner: First we shall note and carefully analyse Scotus' references to intuitive cognition as found in *each of his works separately*, prefacing the exposition of each work with some notes which may serve as a critical guide to the proper use of these works as we have them in the standard editions. Our exposition will be arranged according to an order which combines systematic significance with what little we know of chronological sequence. In other words, since our knowledge of chronological sequence is too restricted to allow of a complete classification on this basis, we supplement it by basing our arrangement on two other factors, namely, the relative importance of the various

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<sup>15</sup> Again we may seem to be laboring the obvious. But again we feel that circumstances justify our insistence on these "fundamentals". To take but one instance, how much effect has Jaeger's work had in our evaluation of that period of scholasticism which was predominantly influenced by Aristotle? Now that the "principle of organic development" has been applied to its originator, despite the "scholastic notion of his philosophy as a static system of conceptions", it should be apparent to the serious student that a revision of that "static notion" is long overdue.

works from the particular standpoint of their contribution to our problem, and the general significance of the same works in relation to Scotus' teaching as a whole.<sup>16</sup>

By means of summaries we shall collate the conclusions arrived at by means of such analysis. Then we shall try to reconstruct and evaluate the whole picture of Scotus' doctrine on intuitive cognition, after considering several *dubia* raised by Scotistic commentators and derived from certain difficulties in interpreting Scotus' own words.

It is hardly necessary to add that we shall confine our study to those works which have been proved authentic.<sup>17</sup>

Let us now proceed to analyse our key-texts from the *Quodlibeta*. What we discover there will be used as a directive for our study of other works. Since we have committed ourselves to a careful analysis of texts, we shall quote the Latin originals in the body of our discussion rather than in footnotes. This will make it easier for the reader to check immediately on our interpretation.

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<sup>16</sup> Since Scotus was apparently working on nearly *all* of his writings at the time of his death, we must content ourselves with a tentative classification according to flexible (and often overlapping) periods—e.g., Later Period, Middle Period, Earlier Period. Thus we consider the *Quodlibeta* as representative of his Later Period; and for practical purposes only we consider the *Oxoniense* and the *Reportata Parisiensia* as representative of an indefinite Middle Period. The weakest point in this classification is undoubtedly the indiscriminate lumping together of the *Oxoniense* and the *Rep. Parisiensia* in the Middle Period. For many parts of both are conceivably, and even probably, later than the *Quodlibeta*. But since it is impossible, without access to the MSS., to isolate those passages from the Vives edition of these works, we are obliged to consider them as a whole. That is why we start with the *Quodlibeta* as a genuinely later work, and then classify the other works according to their greater or lesser significance for our purpose—i.e., according to the amount of information they give us regarding intuitive and abstractive cognition. The titles "Major" and "Minor" have no other signification in our headings.

<sup>17</sup> We quote always from the Wadding-Vives ed. of Scotus' *Opera Omnia* (in 26 volumes, Paris, 1891-1895). References such as, XIV, 206a are to be read as referring to Vol. Fourteen, p. 206, left hand column, of this edition. Other references are self-explanatory—e.g., *Oxon.* for the *Opus Oxoniense*, etc.



## B. ANALYSIS OF TEXTS

## SECTION I—LATER PERIOD

*Quaestiones Quodlibetales*

There are 21 *QQ. Quodlibetales* in the Vives edition (vols. XXV-XXVI) although there is some doubt as to the authenticity of the last one.<sup>18</sup> Glorieux assigns Advent, 1307, as the most probable date for the delivery of the *Quodlibeta*.<sup>19</sup> Certainly they were delivered between 1304 and 1308. Just when they were written down in their present form is unknown. However, since the earliest possible date for their commitment to writing is 1304 (only four years before Scotus' death), the *Quodlibeta* must be considered one of the latest works in the Scotistic corpus.<sup>20</sup> In addition to being one of the later works, the *Quodlibeta* deserves attention because it is one of the most important works. As the author of the Preface to the Vivès edition says, "opus est pretiosissimum suum, et medullam doctrinae, quam Doctor in Sententiis tradidit, majori claritate, faciliiori methodo, et solidiori argumentorum fundamento complectens, in omnibus subtilis, hic subtilissimus exstitit Doctor, ubi aliis aliae speculationis levavit se supra se. Ultimum omnium opus istud scripsit; ut igitur posterius generatione, ita prius perfectione inter omnia eius opera habendum est" (ed. Vivès, XXV, 2). Scholia by Hugo Cavellus; commentary by Lychetus.

In the sixth question of the *QQ. Quodlibetales* (ed. Vivès, XXV, 243 et seq.) Scotus gives an excellent summary of the cardinal features of his doctrine on intuitive and abstractive cognition. Though by no means complete, it serves as one of the best possible introductions to the subject. However, the reader must always bear in mind that this question deals with a purely theological problem: *Utrum aequalitas in divinis sit*

<sup>18</sup> Cfr. M. Grajewski, O.F.M., "Duns Scotus in the light of Modern Research", *Proc. Amer. Cath. Philos. Assoc.*, XVIII (1942), 177.

<sup>19</sup> Cfr. P. Glorieux, *La littérature quodlibétique de 1260 à 1320* (Bibliothèque Thomiste V), Paris: Vrin, 1925, p. 218.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

*relatio realis?* Scotus speaks here of intuitive cognition only to explain the act of the Beatific Vision.

He distinguishes between two acts of the intellect,<sup>21</sup> but prefaces his distinction with the remark that it is applicable *only on the level of simple apprehension*.<sup>22</sup> In other words, the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition applies only to the act of apprehending a simple object:

... distinguitur de duplici actu intellectus, et hoc loquendo de simplici apprehensione sive intellectione obiecti simplicis (*loc. cit.*, p. 243b).

i) *Abstractive cognition*:

On the level of simple apprehension the intellect can act in such a way that it regards an object with complete indifference to the existence or non-existence, the presence or absence, of the said object. We are aware of this fact from frequent experience, because we comprehend universals or the quiddities of things whether they have existence in a *suppositum* outside the mind or not, and whether they are actually present in this *suppositum* or absent:

unus (actus intellectus) indifferenter potest esse respectu obiecti existentis et non existentis, et indifferenter etiam respectu obiecti, non realiter praesentis, sicut et realiter praesentis; istum actum frequenter experimur in nobis, quia universalia, sive quidditates rerum, intelligimus aequae, sive habeant ex natura rei esse extra in aliquo supposito, sive non, et ita de praesentia et absentia (*ibid.*).

<sup>21</sup> As we shall see later, the same distinction can also be made with regard to sense cognition, though not on the level of the *external* senses alone. In fact, our awareness of the distinction on the level of sense-knowledge is one of the main reasons why Scotus insists that it also exists on the higher level of intellectual knowledge; cfr. n. 31 *infra*.

<sup>22</sup> The importance of bearing this restriction in mind is brought out by the fact that most of the misapprehensions of Frs. Belmond and Veuthey (cfr. n. 3 *supra*) arose precisely from a neglect of this fundamental point.

ii) *Intuitive cognition*:

A second act of the intellect on this same level of simple apprehension is that by which we apprehend the object of our cognition precisely as existing and as present:

Alius autem actus intelligendi est, quem tamen non ita certitudinaliter experimur in nobis;<sup>23</sup> possibilis tamen est talis, qui scilicet praecise sit obiecti praesentis ut praesentis, et existentis ut existentis . . . ista inquam intellectio potest proprie dici intuitiva, quia ipsa est intuitio rei, ut existentis et praesentis (*loc. cit.*, p. 243b-244).

Having thus briefly described the difference between intuitive and abstractive cognition, Scotus feels obliged to justify his distinction—i.e., to prove that there are two kinds of cognition as he describes them. In this text he offers two proofs for *abstractive* cognition. The first is based on experience:

Istum actum [scil. cognitionis abstractivae] frequenter experimur in nobis.

It is an empirical fact, verifiable from everyday experience, that I can have a simple knowledge of, let us say, the Duke of Kent and of the present Prime Minister of Australia provided that, at some time or other, I have actually been in personal contact with them or have at least seen them. Yet one of them is no longer living and the other is certainly not actually present to me here and now. Therefore I do have an intellectual act on the level of simple apprehension which is indifferent to the actual existence and presence of the object known by this act.

A second proof for the existence of *abstractive* cognition is called by Scotus a proof "*a posteriori*":<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> As we shall see later, Scotus is more positive about intuitive cognition than he appears to be in this text. His assertion that we do not *experience* intuitive cognition as certainly as abstractive cognition may sound strange to modern ears. But we must remember that Scotus, like most mediaeval psychologists, was haunted by the metaphysical approach to psychology which was one of the most unfortunate Aristotelian legacies under which philosophers of his time labored.

<sup>24</sup> In a sense, *a posteriori* also means "from experience"; but here it apparently has the special signification of an argument proceeding from the



Et etiam hoc probatur a posteriori, quia scientia conclusionis vel intellectus principii, aequae in intellectu manet, re existente et non existente, praesente vel absente, et aequae potest haberi actus sciendi conclusionem, et intelligendi principium; ergo aequae potest haberi intellectio extremi illius, a quo dependet illud intelligere complexum conclusionis vel principii; iste actus intelligendi, qui scientificus dici potest, quia praevisus et requisitus ad scire conclusionis, et ad intelligere principii, potest satis proprie dici abstractivus (*loc. cit.*, p. 243b).

In reading this text it is necessary to bear in mind the distinction between a *complexum* and an *incomplexum*. *Incomplexa* are the extremes of a proposition, and a *complexum* is a proposition or the result of joining two *incomplexa* by means of the copula "*est*". Now Scotus points out that the knowledge of a conclusion or the understanding of a principle remains in the intellect in precisely the same way whether the object that gave rise to the derivation of the conclusion or principle remains present to the intellect or not; or, for that matter, whether or not the object still exists. In other words, the knowledge of a conclusion is unaffected by the presence or absence, the existence or non-existence, of the object or objects to which it refers; and the understanding of a principle is similarly unaffected by the presence or absence, the existence or non-existence, of the object or objects that gave rise to the knowledge of the *incomplexa* contained in the proposition which formulates the principle. To take a simple example, I might arrive at the conclusion: "John Jones is mortal". This is a *complexum* composed of the two *incomplexa* "John Jones" and "mortal". Now I can, and do, understand this conclusion in one and the same way, whether John Jones is present or absent, actually existing or not existing.<sup>25</sup> In the same way I can know a principle such as: "The whole is greater than a part" provided that I have con-

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*posterior* (the effect) to the *prior* (the cause). A *probatio a posteriori* is a *probatio quia* in scholastic terminology.

<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that there is no question here of the truth or falsity of propositions. We are only concerned with their intelligibility.

cepts of whole and part. These concepts are derived from, or engendered by, particular objects. Yet my understanding of the principle is in no way affected by any subsequent presence or absence, existence or non-existence, of those objects. Arguing, then, from the effect to the cause, Scotus maintains that, if our knowledge of the *complexa* (conclusions and principles, in this case) is indifferent to qualifications of existence and presence, our knowledge of the *incomplexa* also must be similarly indifferent in the given cases. And therefore he rightly concludes that the apprehension of *incomplexa* in such a manner (i.e., *abstractive*) can justly be called an *actus scientificus*: (a) because such apprehension precedes and is requisite for the knowledge of a conclusion and the understanding of a principle, and (b) because such apprehension, being abstractive, disregards existence (which implies contingency) and thus provides the basis for the necessary propositions with which science is concerned.

As Scotus points out, all this is a matter of common experience. Hence there should be no difficulty in admitting the fact of abstractive cognition. But since, according to him, the fact of intuitive cognition is not so certainly experienced, he is particularly interested in elaborating proofs for this kind of knowledge.

In the present question of the *Quodlibeta* (q. 6) we find a progressive proof for the possibility of *intuitive* cognition. In the first place, Scotus shows that absolutely speaking (i.e., abstracting from circumstances of the *status viae* and the *status patriae*) we *can* have intuitive cognition; he then decides that we *should* have it; finally he concludes that we *shall* have it, at least in heaven.

(a) We *can* have it:

Omnis perfectio cognitionis absolute, quae potest competere potentiae sensitivae, potest eminenter competere potentiae cognitivae intellectivae; nunc autem perfectionis est in actu cognoscendi, ut cognitio est, perfecte attingere primum cognitum; non autem perfecte attingitur, quando non in se attingitur, sed tantummodo in aliqua diminuta, seu derivata similitudine ab ipso; sensitiva autem habet hanc per-

fectionem in cognitione sua, quia potest obiectum attingere in se, ut existens, et ut praesens est in existentia reali, et non tantum diminute attingendo ipsum in quadam perfectione diminuta; ergo ista perfectio competit intellectivae in cognoscendo; sed non potest sibi competere, nisi cognosceret existens, et ut in existentia propria praesens est . . . (*loc. cit.*, 244<sup>a</sup>).<sup>26</sup>

The argument is clear enough as it stands. Whatever is absolutely a perfection of cognition, and can pertain to a cognitive faculty on the level of sensation can also, and in an eminent degree, pertain to a cognitive faculty on the higher level of intellection. But to be able to attain the *primum cognitum*<sup>27</sup> perfectly is certainly a perfection of cognition. It is not attained perfectly when it is attained not *in se* but only in some diminished or derived similitude. The sensitive power has the perfection of attaining its object *in se*, as existing and as present in its real existence. Therefore this perfection is appropriate for the intellectual power also.<sup>28</sup>

(b) We *should* have it:

Talem autem actum cognitionis de existente ut existens et praesens est, habet Angelus de se . . . ergo ista intellectio possibilis Angelo est possibilis simpliciter intellectivae nostrae, quia promittitur nobis quod erimus aequales Angelis (*ibid.*).

<sup>26</sup> The text continues: *vel in aliquo obiecto intelligibili eminenter ipsum continente, de quo non curamus ad praesens*. This is added for purely theological reasons and concerns only the divine (and possibly angelic) knowledge. At present we are only interested in human knowledge.

<sup>27</sup> The *primum cognitum* is different in different orders of knowledge; cfr. Basil Heiser, "The *Primum Cognitum* according to Duns Scotus", *Franciscan Studies* XXIII (New Series, Vol. 2, 1942), 193-216 and Allan Wolter, *The Transcendentals and their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus* (Franciscan Institute Publications No. 3, St. Bonaventure N. Y., 1946), ch. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Scotus seems to imply here that a *species* is not required for either sensitive or intellectual intuitive cognition. This is a problem to which we shall return later.



Of course this is a theological argument, but, as we pointed out in the beginning, Scotus is here arguing a theological point. It would therefore be unjust to accuse him of a theologism.<sup>29</sup> In any case, the evidence for intuitive cognition does not rest on theological arguments alone. As we shall see later, Scotus elaborates at least three proofs of a purely rational nature which force us to recognize the fact of intuitive cognition.

(c) We *shall* have it:

From the nature of the Beatific Vision it is obvious that abstractive cognition cannot be the means of its enjoyment. In this case at least, intuitive cognition *must* be given. For abstractive cognition would not carry with it any guarantee of the existence and actual presence of the object of the Beatific Vision, nor would it provide us with an immediate contact *in se* with that object (which is God):

Actus beatificus intellectus non potest esse cognitio abstractiva, sed necessario intuitiva, quia abstractiva est aeque existentis et non existentis, et sic beatitudo potest (posset?) esse in obiecto non existente, quod est impossibile; abstractiva etiam possit haberi, licet obiectum non attingatur in se, sed in similitudine; beatitudo autem numquam habetur nisi ipsum obiectum beatificum *immediate in se* attingatur . . . (*ibid.*).

Again, of course, this is a theological argument, but none the less cogent for that—especially since Scotus is addressing theologians.<sup>30</sup>

In question 13 of the *Quodlibeta* Scotus further elaborates on the notions of intuitive and abstractive cognition, without however expressly mentioning these terms. As before, he distin-

<sup>29</sup> It is interesting in this connection to note the reverence and respect which Scotus has for the human intellect. For him it is not the lowest spiritual form which, in the realm of intellectual beings, occupies a place similar to that of prime matter in the realm of sensible beings. On the contrary, it has essentially the same potentialities as the angelic intellect: *Paulo minus ab angelis minuisti eum.*

<sup>30</sup> Note again the implication that intuitive cognition does not require a *species*, for it attains its object *immediate in se*.

guishes between two cognitive operations,<sup>31</sup> the first of which attains its object in its proper actual existence; the second attains its object not as existing *in se* (a) either because the object does not exist, or (b) because the act of cognition does not take the existence or non-existence of the object into account. An example of the first kind of cognition (which can be identified as intuitive in virtue of the definition given in *Quodl.* q. 6) is the *seeing* of a color or the sensation of any exterior sense. An example of the second kind (*abstractive* cognition) is the *imagination* of a color—because we can imagine a color when it does not exist just as well as when it does exist:

distinguo de operatione;<sup>32</sup> aliqua cognitio est per se existentis, sicut quae attingit obiectum in sua propria existentia actuali. Exemplum de visione coloris, et communiter in sensatione sensus exterioris. Aliqua etiam est cognitio obiecti, non ut existentis in se, sed vel obiectum non existit, vel saltem illa cognitio non est eius, ut actualiter existentis. Exemplum, ut imaginatio coloris, quia contingit imaginari rem, quando non existit, sicut quando existit (*loc. cit.* n. 8; XXV, 521).

<sup>31</sup> Though he is chiefly concerned here with cognitive operations, Scotus remarks that a similar distinction can perhaps be made with regard to appetitive operations. Perhaps he has in mind an analogy on the following lines: Just as Faith precedes and is ordered to Vision, so also Hope precedes and is ordered to Possession. And as Vision is the immediate intuitive apprehension of the object of Faith, so Possession is the immediate realization of the object of Hope. In that sense, appetite may be said to be analogous to intellection as regards intuition. But this is only a surmise.

<sup>32</sup> Scotus uses the word "*operatio*" here instead of "*actus*" because he wishes to distinguish between the *actus intrinsecus* of cognition and the *actus productivus* of cognition. "*Actus*" is not to be understood here in the sense of the act by which cognition is produced or educed or induced (i.e., as the act terminating in knowledge), but in the sense of actually knowing—i.e., the act or operation by which the agent is perfected as by the ultimate act. Therefore, to avoid any possible confusion with *actio* in the sense of the genus "*actio*", Scotus uses the word "*operatio*" to signify the *actus intrinsecus* or the act which ultimately perfects the agent, while the word "*actio*" is here reserved for *productive* activity or *actio* in the sense of the genus "*actio*"; cfr. XXV, 507.

So far the distinction has been drawn on the level of sense cognition only. There it is a matter of experience and requires no proof. But on the level of intellectual cognition a similar distinction can be proved (and the implication is that it should be proved, for Scotus goes to some lengths in order to do so).<sup>33</sup>

#### FIRST PROOF:

It is obvious that there can be intellectual cognition of a *non-existing* object:

patet quod aliqua potest esse intellectio non existentis (*loc. cit.*, p. 521<sup>a</sup>).

Experience (and the examples given in the analysis of *Quodl.* q. 6) are sufficient guarantee of this. But what of intellectual cognition of an *existing* object *as existing*? This also must be possible, because the Blessed in Heaven will have precisely that kind of cognition of the object of the Beatific Vision; otherwise the Blessed could be satisfied in the contemplation of the object of the Beatific Vision even if it did not exist (which is, of course, impossible; but the impossible assumption proves that the name "*clara visio facialis*", as applied to the Beatific Vision, demands that we have more than a mere abstractive cognition of its object; for the *actus cognoscendi* in this regard tends to a knowledge of its object as *this* object present in itself, in its own actual existence):

Consimilis distinctio probari potest in cognitione intellectiva. Hoc probatur primo, quia patet quod aliqua potest esse intellectio non existentis; aliqua etiam potest esse obiecti existentis, ut existentis, quia talem habebit beatus de obiecto beatifico, alioquin possit aliquis esse beatus in obiecto, esto per impossibile, ipsum non esset existens, de quo dicitur habere claram visionem, sive facialem, propter hoc quod actus eius cognoscendi tendit in illud, ut in se praesens in propria existentia actuali (*ibid.*).

<sup>33</sup> In the *Oxonienne* and the *Quodlibeta* we find only two distinct proofs for abstractive cognition, whereas there are at least four different proofs for intuitive cognition.



The second part of this proof is, of course, based on a theological premiss, as is the corresponding proof in *Quodl.* q. 6. But here, as there, Scotus also gives a proof that is based on purely rational grounds.

## SECOND PROOF:

Whatever is of the nature of a perfection in cognition can pertain to intellectual cognition even more than to sense cognition. But to be able to attain the object (of cognition) really as it is in itself (*in se realiter*) is of the nature of a perfection, provided that the potency or faculty of the attainer is not debased on account of some imperfection in the object. Therefore the intellect *can* have an act by which it thus attains an object *in its real existence*—at least such an object as is more noble than the intellect in question, or equally as noble as it:

Secundo probatur, quia quidquid est perfectionis in cognitione, magis potest competere cognitioni intellectivae quam sensitivae. Nunc autem posse attingere obiectum in se realiter perfectionis est, ubi non vilesceat potentia attingentis propter imperfectionem obiecti; ergo intellectus potest habere actum quo sic attingat obiectum in sua reali existentia, saltem illud obiectum, quod est nobilius tali intellectu vel aequo nobile (*ibid.*).<sup>34</sup>

It should be noted that, so far, this proof speaks only of intellect in general. Applying his conclusion to *our* intellects, Scotus argues:

Et si concedatur de intellectu nostro, ipsum scilicet posse habere talem actum cognitionis, quo attingat rem, ut existentem in se, pari ratione potest hoc concedi de quocumque obiecto, quia intellectus noster est potentialis respectu cuiuscumque intelligibilis (*ibid.*).

He does not say that our intellects have the kind of cognition he is describing; he merely says that *if* our intellects *can* have

<sup>34</sup> Scotus calls this a "proof *per simile*" (cfr. *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9, n. 6; XII, 212b) and elaborates it on at least six different occasions. It should be noted that this proof gains considerable weight from the familiar Scotistic contention that there is no real distinction between the faculties of the soul.

such cognition then they *can* have it with regard to any object whatsoever. In other words, he is more concerned, in this text, with the *object* of intuitive cognition rather than with the problem whether we have it or not.

We have already noted that Scotus seems hesitant to appeal to experience for evidence regarding the fact of intuitive cognition as applied to our intellects:

alius actus intelligendi est [scil. intuitivus], quem tamen non ita certitudinaliter experimur in nobis (*Quodl.* q. 6; XXV, 243b).

Another interesting fact that cannot have escaped the attention of the careful reader is this: in all of the texts quoted so far, Scotus seems loth to commit himself beyond the order of possibility when speaking of *our* intuitive cognition. The proofs we have examined in this connection only state that we *can* have intuitive cognition and *shall* have it in the future life. Are we to infer from this that Scotus was not sure whether we do have it or not in this life?

From other texts in other works we are left no doubt regarding the answer to this question. As we shall show later, Scotus clearly and definitely says in the *Oxonienne* that we do have intuitive cognition *pro statu isto*. And this is no contradiction of what he says in the *Quodlibeta*. For in the latter work he clearly implies the same thing. When he says that we do not *experience* intuitive cognition as certainly as we experience abstractive cognition, we cannot legitimately infer that he was not sure whether we actually *have* it or not. For the comparative (non *ita* certitudinaliter experimur) is unintelligible unless we assume that he believes that we experience *both* intuitive and abstractive cognition. The problem, then, is not whether we *have* intuitive cognition in this life, but whether we experience it as certainly as we experience abstractive cognition. Certitude based on immediate experience is one thing; certitude based on a deductive or inductive proof is another thing altogether. According to Scotus, the first kind of certitude guarantees the fact of intuitive cognition. However, both kinds of cognition

may be known with both kinds of certitude, but in different degrees. And, in any case, Scotus is not concerned with the problem of intuitive cognition *pro statu isto* in the *Quodlibeta*. He only discusses it there in connection with the Beatific Vision.

Further clarification of the nature of intuitive and abstractive cognition is given in the answers to two objections in *Quodl.* q. 13. The first objection is implicitly based on the axiom: "*Intellectus est universalium, sensus autem particularium*" and runs as follows:

Contra istam distinctionem arguitur primo per hoc quod intellectus noster in cognoscendo abstrahit ab hic et nunc, et pari ratione ab omni conditione existentis ut existentis; igitur non competit sibi aliquid per se intelligere, ut existens (*loc. cit.*; XXV, 521).

Scotus replies that the distinction commonly made between intellectual and sensitive cognition *ex parte obiecti* (for example: *Intellectus est universalium, sensus autem particularium*) should not be understood as a distinction between different faculties on the same level (as is the distinction between *sight* in seeing colors and *hearing* in hearing sounds). The distinction between intellect and sense should rather be understood as a distinction between a *superior* cognitive faculty and a cognitive faculty *subordinated* to this superior faculty. Consequently the axiom "*Intellectus est universalium, sensus autem particularium*" should be interpreted thus: the superior faculty can know any object under any aspect, whereas the senses can not. The senses are limited, not the intellect. In other words, the relation of difference between intellect and sense is not symmetrical. More important still, this axiom is not to be understood in an exclusive sense—i.e., it does not mean that the intellect is limited to one mode of cognition and the senses to another; for the intellect is capable of *both* modes, while the senses are capable of only one; or, the superior faculty is capable of anything that pertains to the inferior faculty, though the converse does not hold:

dici potest quod distinctio quae ponitur communiter inter cognitionem intellectivam et sensitivam ex parte obiecti,



puta, quod intelligimus universale, sentimus singulare, et quaecumque distinctio alia isti correspondens, non debet intelligi tamquam inter potentias disparatas ex aequo, sicut est distinctio visus in videndo colores, ab auditu in audiendo sonos; sed debet intelligi distinctio intellectus a sensu, sicut potentiae superioris cognitivae ab aliqua cognitiva subordinata sibi, et per consequens, quod potentia superior potest cognoscere aliquod obiectum, vel sub aliqua ratione, quod obiectum, vel sub qua ratione potentia inferior non potest cognoscere, non tamen e converso, quod inferior possit aliquod obiectum, vel sub aliqua ratione cognoscere; quin superior possit etiam perfectiori modo obiectum illud cognoscere, et sub eadem ratione cognoscibilitatis ex parte obiecti (*ibid.*, 522a).

The importance of this text cannot be stressed too much. As we saw in Part I, the uncritical acceptance of the axiom "*Intellectus est universalium*, etc." gave rise to many difficulties. Scotus here gives an interpretation of that axiom which enables us to dispense with many of those difficulties. Applying his interpretation, he notes that the intellect can know an object in a manner which abstracts from *hic et nunc*—i.e., in such a way that it is indifferent to qualifications of real existence or actual presence of the object. The senses on the other hand, can not know an object in such a way, because the senses are limited to knowing an object *under the aspect of existence*:

et sic potest concedi, quod intellectus potest cognoscere obiectum non ut hic et nunc, quia sub ratione quidditativa absoluta. Sensus autem non potest sic cognoscere obiectum, quia est virtus limitata ad cognoscendum ipsum sub ratione existentis (*ibid.*).<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> This text seems to say that abstractive cognition is not possible on the level of sense-knowledge. But in *Quodl.* q. 13, n. 8 we saw that Scotus did admit abstractive cognition on this level—viz., in the imagination. Hence we must conclude that "*sensus*" in the above text is to be taken as referring only to the *external* senses. This distinction is expressly stated in the *Oxonien*se II, d. 3, q. 9, n. 6 (XII, 213a) where Scotus uses the words "particular senses" where we have used "external senses"; cfr. also: *Et est in intellectu ista distinctio inter intellectionem intuitivam et abstractivam, sicut in parte sensitiva est distinctio inter actum visus et actum phantasie* (*Oxon.* I, d. 1, q. 2, n. 3: VIII, 320a); and cfr. n. 15 *supra*.

Translating this into Scotus' own terminology and applying only his common definition of intuitive and abstractive cognition, we can conclude that the intellect is capable of *both* intuitive and abstractive cognition, while the *exterior* senses are capable only of intuitive cognition. The first part of this conclusion is stated by Scotus himself:

sed non propter hoc intellectus determinatur ad cognoscendum obiectum sub modo opposito, quia indifferens est ad cognoscendum ipsum sub utroque modo (*ibid.*).

The second part of the conclusion (referring to the senses) is also explicitly stated by Scotus, though not so carefully here as elsewhere.<sup>36</sup>

A second objection states that, if abstractive and intuitive cognition are possible for our intellect, it follows that one and the same object can be apprehended by both modes of cognition. How then would these two modes of cognition be distinguished? Not numerically only, because two accidents of the same species cannot be in the same subject at the same time. Not specifically, for whether the act of cognition is specified by the potency or by the object, a specific difference cannot be posited in this case, since in both modes of cognition the potency is the same and the object is the same:

si sint duae tales intellectiones possibiles intellectui nostro, tunc pari ratione eiusdem obiecti poterunt esse duae tales. Quaero tunc quomodo distinguerentur; non numero tantum, quia duo accidentia eiusdem speciei non possunt esse in eodem subiecto simul; nec specie, quia sive actus cognitionis accipiat speciem a potentia sive ab obiecto, cum hic sit eadem potentia, et idem obiectum, non poterit poni differentia specifica (*ibid.*, 521b).

Scotus solves this difficulty by saying that it can be conceded that there are two cognitions of the same object at the same time, such that object is not distinguished from object as is essence from existence. For although there is some objective distinction between them (essence and existence) this distinction

<sup>36</sup> Cfr. preceding note.

is not sufficient *ad propositum*. For existence itself can be known by abstractive cognition; just as I can know essence, so I can know existence, even if it is not really outside the intellect.<sup>37</sup> So abstractive and intuitive cognitions are called "distinct cognitions" (and this means "specifically distinct") on account of the *rationes formales* motivating the one and the other. For in intuitive cognition a thing in its proper existence is objectively the motive *per se*. In abstractive cognition, however, the *per se* motive is something in which a thing has "*esse cognoscibile*" (whether this something be a cause virtually containing the thing in question as knowable, or as an effect), for example a *species* or a likeness containing in representation that of which it is a likeness:

Ad secundum concedi potest quod sint duae cognitiones eiusdem obiecti simul, sic quod non distinguatur obiectum ab obiecto, sicut essentia ab existentia, quia licet inter ista<sup>38</sup> sit aliqua distinctio obiecti, tamen non sufficiens ad propositum, quia etiam ipsa existentia potest cognosci cognitione abstractiva; sicut enim essentiam, sic existentiam possum intelligere, licet non sit realiter extra intellectum. Dicuntur igitur cognitiones distinctae, et hoc secundum speciem propter rationes formales motivas hinc inde, quia cognitione intuitiva res in propria existentia est per se motiva obiective; in cognitione autem abstractiva est per se motivum aliquid, in quo res habet esse cognoscibile, sive sit causa virtualiter continens rem, ut cognoscibile, sive ut effectus, puta species vel similitudo repraesentative continens ipsum, cuius est similitudo (*ibid.*, 522b).

Scotus' meaning here seems to be this: A possible answer to the objection might be that abstractive and intuitive cognition are distinguished by the different aspects of the same object which each considers in that object, namely, that abstractive cognition

<sup>37</sup> Scotus says: "licet non sit realiter extra intellectum". This could be translated as "although that which is known (*intellectum*—i.e., the object) is not really outside" (*extra*—outside the mind? or separable from that which exists?).

<sup>38</sup> The sense would be clearer if we read "*istas*" instead of "*ista*", though both forms are grammatically correct.



considers the essence of the object while intuitive cognition considers its existence. However, though we might call this distinction between essence and existence an *objective distinction*,<sup>39</sup> such a distinction would not be sufficient to answer the objection. For existence itself (which, according to the proposed solution, is the proper object of intuitive cognition) can be known by abstractive cognition. Therefore we must look for another basis of distinction between abstractive and intuitive cognition. Moreover, we must show that these two modes of cognition are not accidents of the *same* species and are not specified either by the potency or by the object. Scotus offers the following solution: intuitive and abstractive cognition are distinguished by reason of their different *rationes formales motivas*—i.e., not by the object as such, but by that in the object which is precisely the *motive* factor in one or the other kind of cognition. To understand this we must remember that Scotus taught that neither the object alone nor the intellect alone is the *total* cause of intellection. The object and the intellect are *partial* causes, together forming one integral cause of knowledge. Yet the object is subordinated to the intellect in this concurrence of partial causes, in so far as the intellect is simply more perfect than the object; nevertheless both partial causes are perfect in their partial causality, neither depending on the other.<sup>40</sup> However, the respective perfection of each partial cause does not mean that both are on the same level of causality. In fact, the intellect is the principle partial cause.<sup>41</sup> Hence it is easy to see how one and the same object may concur in causing two different kinds of cognition, since one and the same object can present to the intellect (the principle partial cause) the two *rationes formales* required to motivate the intellect to one or the other or to both of the two kinds of cognition under discussion, namely, intuitive and abstractive cognition. The *ratio formalis* of the object which moves the intellect to intuitive cognition is *res in propria existentia*; the *ratio formalis*

<sup>39</sup> Remember that Scotus does not believe in a real distinction between essence and existence, but only in a formal distinction *a parte rei*.

<sup>40</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 7, nn. 20-21; IX, 361-3.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 8, n. 2; p. 399.

which moves the intellect to abstractive cognition is *aliquid in quo res habet esse cognoscibile*—i.e., a *species* or a similitude.<sup>42</sup>

The difference between abstractive and intuitive cognition is made much more precise when we consider the question of the relations which exist between each mode of cognition and its object. Scotus develops this point in detail in *Quodl.* q. 13. But since an itemized account of this discussion would lead us too far afield,<sup>43</sup> we shall merely list here his conclusions, arranging them in parallel columns for easier comparison:

## INTUITIVE COGNITION

1. There is a *real* and *actual* relation between the object and the knower.

2. This real and actual relation is twofold:<sup>2</sup>

(a) *mensurabilis ad mensuram*;

(b) *relatio attingentiae alterius ut termini*

or

*relatio tendentiae in alterum ut in terminum.*<sup>44</sup>

## ABSTRACTIVE COGNITION

1. Not necessarily an *actual* relation, but there can be a *potential real* relation.

2. This potential real relation is a *relatio mensurabilis ad mensuram* (corresponding to 2a in other column); it is *not* a *relatio attingentiae* (2b in other column is excluded).

<sup>42</sup> Note again the implication that a *species* is not required in intuitive cognition.

<sup>43</sup> A thorough study of Scotus' theory of relations is badly needed and will amply repay the interested research-worker. A preliminary survey of the question seems to indicate that Scotus has a much more detailed and scientific analysis of this problem than any other scholastic. An exposition of his teaching on this point would be a boon not only to students of mediaeval philosophy and theology, but also to modern logicians. It would provide the latter with a metaphysical basis for their postulates and axioms, and it would enable the former to profit from the important findings of the moderns.

<sup>44</sup> *Loc. cit.*, XXV, 525-6. Lychetus, in his commentary *ad hoc* (p. 526 *et seq.*), asks the following important question: Since intuitive cognition is knowledge of an existent as existing in its proper actual existence, are we to conclude that existence is required precisely as the *ratio formalis terminandi* of intuitive cognition, or as the *ratio formalis movendi intellectum* to intuitive cognition? Or is it neither of these, but rather a condition or disposition of the object, without which intuitive cognition is unat-

3. Can have an actual *relatio rationis*.

4. In fact, a *relatio rationis* is necessary if the act of cognition is to refer to the object by means of an *actus rectus*—not, however, in the case of an *actus reflexus* whose immediate object is the *actus rectus* and whose mediate object is the object that was the immediate object of the *actus rectus*.<sup>45</sup>

In two other questions of the *Quodlibeta* (qq. 7 and 14) Scotus uses the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition to prove a particular point. In neither place does he give an *ex professo* treatment of these two modes of cognition, but several of his remarks are noteworthy as clarifying still more the distinction between them. After recalling the two definitions given in q. 6 he remarks:

etsi cognitio abstractiva possit esse non existentis, aequè sicut et existentis, tamen intuitiva non est nisi existentis, ut existens est (q. 7, n. 8; XXV, 290a).

This makes explicit what could easily have been inferred from previous remarks: intuitive cognition is of an existent object only, although abstractive cognition can be of an existent or of a non-existent object. He continues:

cognitio autem hominis abstractiva et definitiva potest esse non existentis et existentis . . . ergo illa cognitio definitiva est citra cognitionem intuitivam obiecti definiti universalis (*ibid.*).

Unless read very carefully, this text may give the impression that Scotus believed that intuitive cognition was possible in the conceptual order, although previously he had expressly stated that intuitive cognition was limited to the level of simple apprehension

tainable? No definite answer to this is to be found in Scotus, and there is no agreement among Scotistic commentators.

<sup>45</sup> Vol. XXV, p. 539-541.



and referred only to existents, while the conceptual order is essentially indifferent to existence and non-existence.<sup>46</sup> How then should we translate "*illa* [sc. *abstractiva*] *cognitio definitiva est citra cognitionem intuitivam obiecti definiti universalis*"? It seems to speak of intuitive knowledge of a universal!

First of all, what is the meaning of "*cognitio definitiva*"? As Scotus tells us in this very question, *cognitio definitiva* is knowledge pertaining to a definition—the ultimate grade of knowing an *incomplexum* with scientific knowledge.<sup>47</sup> Therefore "*definiti*" must mean "of a thing defined". But to what are we to refer the three words in the genitive case: "*obiecti*", "*definiti*", "*universalis*"? Obviously "*obiecti*" refers to "*cognitionem intuitivam*" and "*definiti universalis*" refers as a unit to "*obiecti*". That is to say, these three words in the genitive case are not to be taken as a unit modifying "*cognitionem intuitivam*". The sense therefore is this: Cognition pertaining to a definition stops short of<sup>48</sup> that intuitive cognition of an object about which a universal definition is made. Therefore our previous statement stands: intuitive cognition is not possible in the conceptual order.

A final reference to intuitive and abstractive cognition in *Quodl.* q. 14 (XXVI, 39) is of interest because it seems to imply again that no species enters into intuitive cognition:

Omnis talis intellectio, scilicet per se et propria et immediata, requirit ipsum obiectum sub propria ratione obiecti praesens,

<sup>46</sup> Incidentally, this is why M. Maritain is definitely unscholastic in his famous doctrine of the intuition of being, for he speaks of an abstractive intuition! In the scholastic sense of these terms such an expression is simply a contradiction (cfr. *A Preface to Metaphysics*, New York: Sheed & Ward, 1940, p. 43 *et seq.*).

<sup>47</sup> *Ultimus gradus cognoscendi aliquod incomplexum cognitione scientifica, sive praevia scientiae, est cognitio definitiva* (*loc. cit.*, p. 289); cfr. also *Oxon.* IV, d. 47, q. 1, n. 3; XX, 493a: *Iudicium dicitur certa apprehensio intellectualis, etiam quaecumque; et hoc modo definitiva cognitio de aliquo potest dici iudicium de veritate illius.*

<sup>48</sup> "*Citra*" can also mean "inferior to". Either sense satisfies the context; both senses are in accordance with Scotus' teaching in other places.

et hoc vel in propria existentia, puta si est intuitiva, vel in aliquo perfecte repraesentante ipsum sub propria et per se ratione cognoscibilis, si fuerit abstractiva.

#### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE QUODLIBETA

##### A. *Conclusions explicitly stated:*

1. The distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition applies only on the level of simple apprehension (q. 6, p. 243b).

2. Abstractive cognition can be of an object which is either existing or not existing, present or absent; it is indifferent to these notes of existential qualification. Intuitive cognition, however, is of an existing and actually present object only, and of an existing object precisely as existing in its proper actual existence (*ibid.*, and q. 13, p. 525-6).<sup>49</sup>

3. Abstractive cognition does not attain to an object *sub propria ratione* or as it is perfectly in itself, but in a diminished similitude; intuitive cognition, on the other hand, contacts the object in its proper actual existence (*in se*) (q. 6, p. 244 and q. 13, p. 521; cfr. conclusions 4, 12 and 13 *infra*).

4. In abstractive cognition an object moves the intellect, not by itself immediately, but mediately, by means of something (*species vel similitudo*) in which the knowable content of the object is contained. In intuitive cognition a thing moves the intellect by its own existence. In more technical terms, the *ratio formalis motiva* in abstractive cognition is *aliquid in quo res habet esse cognoscibile*; the *ratio formalis motiva* in intuitive cognition is *res in propria existentia* (q. 13, p. 522b).

5. Abstractive cognition can be called an "*actus scientificus*" of the intellect (q. 6, p. 243).

6. In intuitive cognition there is a real and actual relation between knower and object known; in abstractive cognition there can be a potential real relation and an actual *relatio rationis* (q. 13, pp. 525-6, 539-41).

7. Abstractive and intuitive cognition are specifically distinct (q. 13, p. 522b).

<sup>49</sup> Note Lychetus' difficulties on this point (references given in n. 44 *supra*).

8. Intuitive cognition is of an existent object only; abstractive cognition can be of an existent object or of a non-existent (q. 7, p. 290a).

9. Intuitive cognition is not possible in the conceptual order (*ibid.*).

10. The intellect is capable of both intuitive and abstractive cognition; the exterior senses are capable only of intuitive cognition, but the interior senses are also capable of abstractive cognition (q. 13, p. 522a and notes 35 and 21 *supra*).

11. We do not experience intuitive cognition as certainly as we experience abstractive cognition (q. 6, p. 243b) but it is certainly possible for us to have it, at least in the future life (q. 6, p. 244a and q. 13, p. 521a).

12. If our intellect has or is capable of intuitive cognition, then it can have such cognition of any object whatsoever (q. 13, p. 521).

#### B. *Conclusions legitimately inferred:*

13. Intuitive cognition gives us an *immediate* contact *in se* with its object (q. 6, p. 244a&b).

14. This seems to imply that a *species* is not required for intuitive cognition (either sensitive or intellectual), because intuitive cognition attains its object immediately *in se* (q. 6, p. 244a; q. 13, p. 522b; q. 14, p. 39).

Our analysis of the *Quodlibeta* (our key-text) must have revealed certain important trends of Scotus' thought to the discerning reader. Since our aim in this study is to follow Scotus as closely as possible, we feel obliged to make these trends explicit and to use them as guides in our subsequent analysis.

First of all, we notice that eleven of the twelve conclusions we listed as "explicitly stated" refer to the *distinction* between intuitive and abstractive cognition. In other words, Scotus' primary object here seems to be to define his terms as clearly as possible. Secondly, he is equally concerned with the problem: given a clear definition of terms in the speculative order, does such a distinction actually exist in the real order? Hence we find him constructing careful proofs for the *fact* of intuitive cog-



dition as opposed to abstractive cognition. These proofs can be classified as follows:

1. The fact of *abstractive* cognition is proved (i) *from experience* (q. 6, p. 243b; q. 13, p. 521a) and (ii) *a posteriori* (q. 6, p. 243b).

2. The *possibility* of *intuitive* cognition is proved (i) *per simile* (q. 6, p. 244a; q. 13, p. 521a) and (ii) from the nature of the Beatific Vision (*ibid.*).

Since Scotus was apparently the first scholastic to try to incorporate the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition into his system on any large scale, it is only natural that he should have been concerned with these two problems first and foremost. And since further study of his writings on this point reveals that these two problems continue to play a major role in all of his discussions on intuitive and abstractive cognition, the main lines along which our reconstruction of his thought should proceed seem now to be fairly well defined if we are to adhere to the methodological principles outlined at the beginning of this chapter.

Our first task, then, will be to follow Scotus in his definition of terms and in his presentation of evidence in support of his contention that there is in fact a distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition. This will be done in the following sections of the present chapter.

But we also see from the *Quodlibeta* that there are other problems about which Scotus does not express himself definitively in what we have chosen as our key-texts. These problems have been indicated either in our list of "conclusions legitimately inferred" or in passing, as the occasion arose in our analysis of texts. Therefore we have decided to treat these problems separately after our discussion of his *definition of terms* and his *proofs for the distinction* between intuitive and abstractive cognition. Two of these problems manifest themselves in the *Quodlibeta* and they will be discussed later in a special section. They are:

1. Is a *species* necessary for intuitive cognition?

2. Does the human intellect actually enjoy intuitive cognition in this life (*pro statu isto*)?

## SECTION 2—INDEFINITE PERIOD

### OTHER MAJOR WORKS <sup>50</sup>

#### 1. *Opus Oxoniense*:

This is Scotus' main work and our principle source for his doctrine (ed. Vivès, vols. VIII to XXI). According to Fr. Balic,<sup>51</sup> Scotus began to comment on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard in Oxford (c. 1298). He commented on Book I and parts of Books II and III. Fr. Balic discovered several unedited MSS which he believes contain this early commentary, now known as the *Prima Lectura Oxoniensis*. This work is the basis for the later *Ordinatio Scoti*, also known as the *Opus Oxoniense*. In 1302-3 Scotus explained Books I and IV at Paris, and again commented on the *Sentences* at Paris in 1305 (during which time he also may have delivered his *QQ. Quodlibetales*). In 1305 he was back at Oxford, where he prepared his *Ordinatio*. The *Opus Oxoniense* as we have it in the Vivès edition does not represent the authentic *Ordinatio Scoti*. Wadding's edition (of which the Vivès ed. is a reprint) does not take the above facts into account, with the result that *our Oxoniense* is really a composite of greater or smaller fragments written at various times and in different places (Paris and Oxford). However, a new edition of the *Oxoniense* will bring no substantially new revelations as regards Scotus' general teaching. The Wadding-Vivès ed. is therefore a safe instrument of research so long as one does not use a single reference as sole evidence for a point of doctrine. When using the Vivès ed. it should be noted that the following parts do not belong to the authentic *Oxoniense* or *Ordinatio Scoti*:

<sup>50</sup> Cfr. n. 13 *supra*.

<sup>51</sup> *Les Commentaires de Jean Duns Scot sur les quatre livres des Sentences*. Louvain (Bibl. de la Revue d' Histoire Eccles., fasc. 1) 1927.

Book I, d. 16; vol. X, pp. 18-31  
 Book I, d. 18; vol. X, pp. 141-150  
 Book I, d. 39; vol. X, pp. 612-656

Book II, d. 3, q. 11; vol. XII, pp. 270-280  
 Book II, d. 5, q. 2; vol. XII, pp. 313-329  
 Book II, d. 12, q. 1-2; vol. XII, pp. 566-607  
 Book II, d. 14, q. 3; vol. XII, pp. 660-680  
 Book II, d. 15-24; vol. XIII, pp. 4-224

Book III, d. 16-40; vol. XIV to end of Vol. XV incl.

However, this does not mean that these passages are not authentic as regards Scotus' thought. They are not authentic merely as regards their inclusion in the *Oxonienſe*. Only one text occurring in the above list has been used in this study (II, d. 3, q. 11) and the reader has been warned of its appearance in a footnote.

With regard to the *Additiones Magnae* (incorporated by Wadding into the text of the *Oxonienſe* and the *Reportata Pariſienſia*), they are probably authentic insofar as they are most likely a *reportatio*. But we must wait for a critical edition before we can use them safely. These *Additiones Magnae* are often called *Reportatio PariſienſIS et Anglicana* and must not be confused with the *Reportata PariſienſIA*.

## 2. *Reportata Pariſienſia*:

This commentary on the Sentences was never completed by Scotus. The missing parts of Book III were supplied from the *Oxonienſe* by different editors. As this work appears in the Wadding and Vivès editions, the *Reportata* must be used very cautiously,<sup>52</sup> because the Wadding ed. is apparently composed of different redactions of the *Reportatio PariſienſIS* and even parts of the *Oxonienſe*. It is a reprint of the composite made by John Major.

<sup>52</sup> Cfr. M. Grajewski, "Duns Scotus in the light of Modern Research, *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, XVIII (1942), 175-7.



For these reasons we have been obliged to list the *Oxoniense* and the *Reportata Parisiensia* under the misleading titles "Other Major Works" and "Indefinite Period". Actually some parts belong to the very latest period, and both works, far from being just "other" major works, are cornerstones in the Scotistic system. However, at the present time we have no other choice than to consider them as we have done here.

Scholia and notes by Cavellus; Commentary by Lychetus, Poncius and Hickey.

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### 1. *The Oxoniense*

In the second book of the *Oxoniense* there is a passage which closely parallels the sixth question of the *Quodlibeta*. Again we find a clear definition of terms at the outset, followed by a proof for the distinction:

Potest enim aliqua esse cognitio obiecti, secundum quod abstrahit ab omni existentia actuali, et potest esse aliqua eius, secundum quod existens, et secundum quod praesens in aliqua existentia actuali . . . Et ut brevius utar verbis, primam voco abstractivam, quae est ipsius quidditatis secundum quod abstrahitur ab existentia actuali, et non existentia. Secundam, scilicet quae est quidditatis rei secundum eius existentiam actualem, vel quae est praesentis secundum talem existentiam, voco cognitionem intuitivam, non prout intuitiva distinguitur contra discursivam, quia sic aliqua abstractiva esset intuitiva,<sup>53</sup> sed simpliciter intuitiva, eo modo quo dicimur intueri rem, sicut est in se (*Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9, n. 6; XII, 212b).

This text makes an important precision with regard to the object of intuitive cognition. We saw in the *Quodlibeta* (cfr. Concl. 12 in our summary) that "if our intellect has or is capable of intuitive cognition, then it can have such cognition of any object whatsoever". Here Scotus tells us *what* we know when we know

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<sup>53</sup> This is the text misquoted by Fr. Belmond; cfr. *Note on Method* at the beginning of this chapter.

an object intuitively. According to him we know the *quiddity* of a thing under the aspect of its existence, and we know a thing that is present, such knowledge being specified by the fact that it grasps the existential notes of the object known. How then does intuitive cognition differ from abstractive cognition, since the quiddities of things are likewise the object of the latter form of cognition? The difference lies not in *what* is known, but in *how* it is known. Abstractive cognition abstracts entirely from the actual existence and presence of its object, while intuitive cognition grasps precisely what abstractive cognition ignores, namely, the actual existence or presence of the same object.

Another important observation made by Scotus is this: Intuitive cognition is not to be understood as a form of cognition whose chief characteristic is a lack of any discursive process.<sup>54</sup> If such were the basis for the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition, the distinction itself would vanish, since in this case what we have previously described as abstractive cognition, would be indistinguishable from intuitive cognition. For what we have called abstractive cognition is also effected without any discursive process, since it is, by definition, on the level of simple apprehension only.

Nor is intuitive cognition to be confused with *distinct* knowledge; for abstractive cognition too can be distinct:

Bene quidem possibile est habere cognitionem distinctam, licet abstractivam (*ibid.*, 213b).

But although a *species* can represent an essence distinctly, it may not represent it as present and existent in itself.<sup>55</sup> And the presence or absence of this existential qualification is the only thing that distinguishes intuitive cognition from abstractive.

<sup>54</sup> Hence the importance of not confusing modern meanings of intuition and "intuitive cognition" as understood by the scholastics.

<sup>55</sup> . . . species aliqua repraesentat essentiam, licet non repraesentat eam ut in se praesentialiter existentem (*ibid.*). In the *Reportata Parisiensia* Scotus points out that not every distinct knowledge is intuitive (since, as we have seen, abstractive knowledge can also be distinct), but the inference is that at least some intuitive cognitions are distinct: "non omnis distincta cognitio est clara et intuitiva" (*Rep. Par. Prol. q. 2; XXII, 42a*).

As in the *Quodlibeta*, so here in the *Oxonienſe* Scotus' main concern after defining his terms is to juſtify the diſtinction he has juſt poſited:

Iſta diſtinctio probatur per rationem et per ſimile (*ibid.*, 212b).

1. *Rational proof for ABSTRACTIVE cognition:*

Scientific knowledge would be impossible without abſtractive cognition. If, therefore, we admit the poſſibility of ſcientific knowledge, we muſt admit the poſſibility of abſtractive cognition alſo; and if we admit that ſcientific knowledge is given in fact, we muſt admit that we actually do have abſtractive cognition. That ſcientific knowledge would be impossible without abſtractive cognition is clear from the definitions of "ſcience" and "abſtractive cognition". If ſcience is a certain habitual knowledge of univerſal and neceſſary concluſions,<sup>56</sup> then ſcience muſt regard its object without regarding its actual exiſtence—i.e., it muſt regard it abſtractively. For if our ſcientific knowledge referred only to exiſting things, as exiſting, one particular item of knowledge could be ſcientific at one moment and unſcientific the next—juſt as an opinion can be true now and false a moment later. If this were the caſe, ſcience would not be permanent but would periſh if and when the object ceaſed to exiſt:

Primum (ſcil. membrum diſtinctionis—i.e., cognitio abſtractiva) patet ex hoc quod poſſumus habere notitiam de aliquibus quidditatibus; ſcientia autem eſt obiecti, ſecundum quod abſtrahit ab exiſtentia actuali, alioquin ſcientia poſſet quandoque eſſe, et quandoque non eſſe, et ita non eſſet perpetua, ſed corrupta re, corrumpereſtur ſcientia illius rei, quod falſum eſt (*ibid.*).

This rather concise ſtatement of the proof is based on the ſame ideas that are uſed in the proof "*a poſteriori*" in the *Quodlibeta*.<sup>57</sup> It is further elaborated in the *Reportata Pariſienſia*:

<sup>56</sup> Cfr. Aristotle, II *de Anima*; Scotus, *Rep. Par.* Prol. q. 1, a. 1 (XXII, 7-8) and *Oxon.* III, d. 24, q. unic., n. 13 (XV, 44).

<sup>57</sup> q. 6 (XXV, 243b).



duplex est intellectio, una scientifica, quae est abstractiva, et non est semper discursiva, aliter enim non posset esse scientia in nobis nisi cognitio scientifica esset abstractiva, quia si omnis cognitio scientifica in nobis esset solum rei existentis, ut existens, eadem scientia vel habitus posset esse nunc scientia, jam non, sicut eadem opinio nunc<sup>58</sup> est vera, jam falsa, Socrate sedente, vel surgente; igitur cognitio scientifica est rei, ut abstrahit in cognitione (*op. cit.*, II, d. 3, q. 3; XXII, 592b).

This makes Scotus' meaning clear when he says that it is impossible to have scientific knowledge about existents, as existent. For if a scientific statement were couched in language such as this: "Socrates is sitting here", it would be true only for the time during which Socrates remained seated in the presence of the person making the statement. If Socrates stood up, the former proposition would no longer be a true statement of present conditions. Hence we must conclude either that science in the usual acceptation of the term (i.e., as *permanent* or habitual knowledge of necessary conclusions) is impossible, or that science can not deal with particulars with special reference to their existence and actual presence. Experience rules out the first alternative. Hence we must conclude that the *fact* of abstractive cognition is guaranteed by the *fact* of scientific knowledge. In other words, since not all of our knowledge refers to existing things, precisely as existing, we must have abstractive cognition in the sense in which we have consistently defined that term. This further clarifies Scotus' statement in *Quodl.* q. 6 (XXV, 243b) to the effect that abstractive cognition can be called an "*actus scientificus*" of the intellect.

## 2. Rational proof for INTUITIVE cognition:

Secundum (scil. membrum distinctionis—i.e., cognitio intuitiva) probatur, quia quod est perfectionis in potentia inferiori, videtur eminentius esse in superiori, quae est eiusdem generis; in sensu autem, qui est potentia cognitiva inferior intellectu, perfectionis est, quod est cognitiva rei

<sup>58</sup> The Vivès ed. has "*non*" where we have read "*nunc*"; our emendation seems to be demanded by the context.

secundum quod in se existens est, et secundum quod est praesens secundum existentiam suam; igitur hoc est possibile in intellectu qui est suprema vis cognitiva; igitur potest habere cognitionem rei secundum quod praesens (*Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9, n. 6; XII, 212b).

Since this argument is practically identical with the argument in *Quodl.* q. 6 which proves that we *can* have intuitive cognition, there is no need to comment on it here, except to note that again Scotus does not commit himself beyond the order of possibility—i.e., he does not say that we *do* have intuitive cognition, but only that we *can* have it.

### 3. *Theological proof for INTUITIVE cognition:*

Istud etiam secundum membrum per hoc declaratur quod non expectamus cognitionem de Deo, qualis posset haberi de eo, ipso (per impossibile) non existente, vel non praesente per essentiam, sed expectamus intuitivam quae dicitur facie ad faciem, quia sicut sensitiva est facialis, scilicet rei, secundum quod est praesentialiter existens, ita et illa quam expectamus (*ibid.*, 213a).

This argument is the same as that given in *Quodl.* q. 6 to prove that we *shall* have intuitive cognition in the future life at least. The same line of reasoning was also found in *Quodl.* q. 13.

### 4. *Proof "per simile" for both ABSTRACTIVE and INTUITIVE cognition:*

Secunda declaratio huius distinctionis est per simile in potentiis sensitivis; aliter enim potentia vel sensus particularis cognoscit obiectum, aliter phantasma. Sensus enim particularis est obiecti secundum quod est per se vel in se existens; phantasma cognoscit idem secundum quod est praesens per speciem, quae species posset esse eius, licet non esset existens vel praesens, ita quod cognitio phantastica est abstractiva respectu sensu particularis, quia quae sunt dispersa in inferioribus, quandoque sunt unita in superioribus; ita isti duo modi cognoscendi qui sunt dispersi in potentiis sensitivis propter organum (quia non est idem organum, quod est bene receptivum, et quod est bene retentivum), uniti sunt in intellectu, cui ut uni potentiae, potest uterque actus competere (*ibid.*).

This argument also reminds us of passages in the *Quodlibeta* (qq. 6 and 13) where Scotus argues that intuitive cognition must be possible for our intellects, since it is found in the senses and what pertains to a cognitive faculty on the level of sensation can also pertain to a cognitive faculty on the higher level of intellection. It must be admitted that such an argument, though persuasive, is not conclusive. But Scotus has strengthened the *Quodlibeta* proof in this text from the *Oxonienne*. He takes the same starting point, namely, that the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition is found verified on the level of sense cognition. But instead of then appealing to a universal principle which is difficult to prove (scil., *omnis perfectio cognitionis absolute, quae potest competere potentiae sensitivae, potest eminenter competere potentiae cognitivae intellectivae*)<sup>59</sup> and trying to deduce his conclusion therefrom as he did in the *Quodlibeta*, he changes here to the level of induction, appealing to a psychological fact verifiable by experience, namely, that activities which are distributed among various powers (or faculties) on a lower level (viz., of sensation) are sometimes united in one faculty on a higher level (viz., of intellection). However, even this premiss does not make the argument conclusive. For we know only that it holds sometimes (*quandoque*), as Scotus is careful to note; and what guarantee do we have that it holds in the particular case under discussion? We must conclude, therefore, that Scotus' "Proof *per simile*" is only an interesting *persuasio* and not demonstrative.

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In the Third Book of the *Oxonienne* Scotus refers back to the text from the Second Book which we have just studied<sup>60</sup> and

<sup>59</sup> Cfr. *Quodl.* q. 6 (XXV, 244a).

<sup>60</sup> . . . duplex est cognitio, scilicet abstractiva et intuitiva, quae probata fuit in secundo libro (*Oxon.* III, d. 14, q. 3, n. 4; XIV, 524a). If this backward reference is Scotus' own, we have here an indication that the present question was written later than the one just analysed above. But such backward references are not very reliable evidence if taken alone.



supplements the distinction made there between intuitive and abstractive cognition by further distinguishing between *perfect* and *imperfect* intuitive cognition. This sub-distinction reveals fine psychological insight on his part and is indispensable for a well-rounded and consistent explanation of the phenomena of memory; it also helps to explain the difficult problem of divine and human knowledge of *futurabilia* (future contingent facts).

To state it briefly, *perfect* intuitive cognition is that by which an object is known as existing and as actually present to me, or as present to me by its existence; *imperfect* intuitive cognition is an opinion concerning the future or a memory concerning the past:

Loquendo tamen de cognitione intuitiva . . . dico quod illa est vel perfecta, qualis est de obiecto praesentialiter existens; vel imperfecta, qualis est opinio de futuro vel memoria de praeterito (*loc. cit.*, XIV, 527a).

Speaking of the future, Scotus is of course referring to contingent facts. It is obvious that I cannot know by perfect intuitive cognition that John Jones will be sitting in his room tomorrow at ten o'clock. For to have perfect intuitive knowledge of this fact I should have to be in the actual presence of John Jones seated in his room at ten o'clock tomorrow. Since it is impossible to be thus situated before the event, it is obviously impossible to have perfect intuitive knowledge of it. But I can have an opinion concerning this event. Even prior to the event I can apprehend John Jones *as though he were* seated in his room at ten o'clock on such and such a day and actually present to me in this condition. I do this as often as I form an opinion that John Jones *will be* thus situated at some future time. And because this opinionative knowledge of the future is qualified by notes of time and place, Scotus calls it a kind of intuitive cognition—viz., imperfect intuitive cognition. Unfortunately he does not elaborate on this point. But in the matter of imperfect intuitive knowledge of *past* events (*memoria de praeterito*) he is more enlightening:

[cognitio intuitiva imperfecta] . . . relinquitur ex ista perfecta, quia de talibus pluribus perfecte intuitive cognitis derelictae sunt plures memoriae, quibus cognoscuntur illa obiecta quantum ad conditiones existentiae, non ut praesentia, sed ut praeterita (*ibid.*, 528a).

Imperfect intuitive cognition of the past is, therefore, something left in the mind by a previous perfect intuitive cognition. For from many things known by perfect intuitive cognition many memories remain by means of which their corresponding objects are known with reference to their previous existential conditions—not as present to me here and now, but as having once been present to me and now being past.

It is false to say that, after an object has been apprehended as present to the observer, only an intelligible species is left in the intellect and a *species imaginabilis* in the phantasm. For, in addition to the sensible species left in the phantasm, some species<sup>61</sup> is also left in the memory. But the phantasm and the memory know an object under totally different aspects. The phantasm knows it as it is in itself absolutely (*secundum se absolute*) by apprehending its quiddity. The memory, on the other hand, apprehends the object as apprehended in the past (*ut in praeterito apprehensum*), so that the *immediate* object of the memory is past apprehension, while the object that was apprehended in the past is only the *mediate* object of the act of remembering:

<sup>61</sup> Because of the word "*aliqua*" we are forced to say that Scotus maintains that a *species* is left in the memory. But it is significant that Ockham, in discussing this problem, makes no mention of Scotus' postulating such a *species*. Ockham himself considers that nothing more than a *habitus* is left (cfr. *Rep.* II, p. 15). An examination of the MSS. might reveal that what Scotus really said was "*aliquid* relinquitur", not "*aliqua* relinquitur". For Ockham was definitely influenced by Scotus on this point and it seems strange that he would not mention a *species* if Scotus had mentioned it, especially since Ockham's discussion of perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition is an essential part of his discussion of the problem of the *species intelligibilis*. Moreover, in the *Oxoniense* (cfr. n. 63 *infra*), Scotus calls imperfect intuitive cognition "habitual intuitive cognition"; and in the *Reportata Parisiensia* (cfr. n. 64 *infra*), he expressly states that perfect intuitive cognition causes a *habitus* in the intellect; this argues strongly against the "*species*" interpretation imposed by the reading of "*aliqua*".

Et si obiicitur quod ex re praesente non relinquitur nisi species intelligibilis in intellectu, et in parte sensitiva species imaginabilis, ut in virtute phantastica, hoc falsum est, quia de re praesente non tantum relinquitur species sensibilis in phantasia, sed aliqua <sup>62</sup> in potentia memorativa et illae potentiae cognoscunt obiectum sub alia et alia ratione; nam una cognoscit obiectum secundum se absolute, apprehendendo quidditatem eius; alia apprehendit obiectum, ut in praeterito apprehensum, ita quod apprehensio praeterita est immediatum obiectum, et obiectum immediatum illius apprehensionis praeteritae est obiectum mediatum recordationis (*ibid.*).

The distinction that Scotus draws here with regard to the object of memory is very important. He points out that the first determination of the faculty of remembering is: something was apprehended in the past. The note of "in the past" is the immediate object of the faculty and of the act of this faculty. The object that was apprehended *immediately* in the past by perfect intuitive cognition is only the *mediate* object of the act of remembering. Because of the fact that the object of memory is thus specified by existential qualifications, Scotus is justified in considering the act of remembering as a kind of intuitive cognition, though admittedly imperfect. Another name for this kind of cognition is "habitual intuitive cognition".<sup>63</sup>

The most basic cognitive processes can therefore be described as follows: When some sensible object is present to our senses, a double cognition can be caused in our intellect by virtue of the partial causality of that object:—

1) *abstractive cognition*, in which the agent intellect abstracts the *species* of quiddity from the *species* in the phantasm; this *species* represents the object absolutely, without any reference to actual existence in time and location in place;

2) *intuitive cognition*, in which the object is apprehended precisely as present to the observer here and now—i.e., not absolutely (which means from the quidditative aspect alone) but

<sup>62</sup> Cfr. preceding note.

<sup>63</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* III, d. 14, p. 3, n. 4 (XIV, 528b). This name is significant in view of what we have said in n. 61 *supra*.



existentially. This kind of cognition "co-operates" with the intellect in the causation of a habit in the intellect<sup>64</sup> and, as a result of this co-operation, a habitual intuitive cognition is caused in the *intellective* memory. This habitual intuitive cognition does not regard the object in its absolute quidditative aspect any more than the initial perfect intuitive cognition does; it regards the known object existentially—i.e., with the qualification that it *was* existing when it was apprehended in the past. And this is the only possible basis for an act of intellectual memory:

Ita etiam praesente aliquo sensibili sensui, potest virtute illius causari in intellectu duplex cognitio, una abstractiva, qua intellectus agens abstrahit speciem quidditatis, ut quidditas est, a specie in phantasmate, quae repraesentat obiectum absolute, non ut existit hic et nunc vel tunc; et alia potest esse in intellectu cognitio intuitiva, quae cooperatur intellectui, et ab hac potest derelinqui habitualis cognitio intuitiva importata in memoria intellectiva, quae sit non quidditatis absolute, sicut fuit in alia, sed cogniti ut existens, quando in praeterito apprehendebatur, ut praeteriit (*ibid.*, 528a-b).

So much for the important distinction between perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition as referred to in *Oxoniense* III, d. 14, q. 3. Scotus' remarks on imperfect intuitive cognition, enlightening though they are, are not extensive enough to allow of further comment here. We must pass on to an examination of other parts of this same question to see what further information we can glean about Scotus' doctrine on *perfect* intuitive cognition, bearing in mind the possibility that this text was written at a comparatively later date.<sup>65</sup>

With regard to the object of perfect intuitive cognition (i.e., what is known by perfect intuitive cognition) Scotus affirms that a common nature, as it precedes singularity, and a singular as such can both be known intuitively . . . as well as abstractively:

<sup>64</sup> Cfr. *Rep. Par.* II, d. 3, q. 3, n. 11 (XXII, 586b).

<sup>65</sup> Cfr. n. 60 *supra*.

duplex est cognitio, scilicet abstractiva et intuitiva . . . et utraque cognitione potest cognosci tam natura, ut praecedat singularitatem, quam singulare ut hoc (*loc. cit.*, XIV, 524a).

This merely reaffirms what was explained in more detail in *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9, n. 6.<sup>66</sup> What is of special interest, however, is the assertion that a singular as singular (*singulare ut hoc*) can be known by intuitive cognition.<sup>67</sup> We shall discuss this point in more detail later, but it seems important to bear this in mind now: even though a singular is known by intuitive cognition, this knowledge of singulars is not the essential feature of intuitive cognition. What distinguishes intuitive cognition from any other kind of knowledge is the fact that it gives us knowledge of an existent *as existing*:

. . . cognitio intuitiva non est tantum singularis, inquantum est cognitio intuitiva, sed essentialiter est ipsius naturae, ut existentis est (*Rep. Par.* IV, d. 45, q. 3; XXIV, 575-6).

This seems to indicate rather strongly that Scotus fully appreciated the epistemological significance of intuitive cognition, especially in view of his assertion that without intuitive cognition our intellects could not be certain of the existence of *any* objects:

<sup>66</sup> In his commentary on this passage, Lychetus says that the *natura communis* only exists as a reality in a singularized nature and therefore can hardly be known intuitively as a real *natura communis*—i.e., as a *natura communis* which precedes singularity—since such a *natura communis* does not exist in reality (vol. XIV, p. 525). This is true as far as it goes, but Lychetus seems to overlook the fact that, according to Scotus, the *natura communis* does not only have an *esse subiectivum* (i.e., existence in an object *outside* the mind), but also has an *esse obiectivum* (i.e., as object of the mind) apart from its *esse* in the singular (cfr. *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 1; XII, 6-77). The above passage seems to be an indication of a definite phenomenological tendency in Scotus. A study of the mediaeval doctrine on the distinction between *esse obiectivum* and *esse subiectivum* would be of immense help in arriving at a rapprochement between scholasticism and the theories of value developed by modern phenomenologists especially.

<sup>67</sup> Henceforth, unless otherwise specified, "intuitive cognition" will be used to refer to *perfect* intuitive cognition.

cognitio quae dicitur intuitiva, potest esse intellectiva, alioquin intellectus non esset *certus* de aliqua existentia alicuius obiecti (*Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 2, n. 12; XX, 305a).

Incidentally, we can also read this text as a proof for the fact that our intellects enjoy intuitive cognition in this life. For if we grant that intuitive cognition is necessary to ensure certitude regarding the existence of an object, and if we also grant that our intellects have such certitude, we must conclude that our intellects have intuitive cognition.

Such proofs are stressed in the Fourth Book of the *Oxoniense*, where we do not find anything new about the distinction between abstractive and intuitive cognition, but where we do find an insistence on the evidence which demands that we recognize the *fact* of intuitive cognition. With regards to the object of intuitive cognition, we are told that, if we grant that the intellect does not know only universals but also knows sensible things intuitively, it follows that all the necessary conditions for an intellectual act of memory are given:

supposito enim quod intellectus non tantum cognoscat universalia . . . sed etiam intuitive cognoscat illa, quae sensus cognoscit . . . et etiam quod cognoscit sensationes . . . sequitur quod in intellectu possint inveniri omnes conditiones prius dictae pertinentes ad recordari (*Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 3, n. 17; XX, 348b-349a).

This text is a rather oblique reference to Scotus' belief that our intellects know sensible things (and therefore singulars) and even our own sensations intuitively. It becomes a direct reference when we consider what he says in parentheses:

et utrumque probatur per hoc quod (intellectus) cognoscit propositiones contingentes veras, et ex eis syllogizat; formare autem propositiones, et syllogizare proprium est intellectui; illarum autem veritas est de obiectis ut intuitively cognitis, sub ratione scilicet existentiae, sub qua cognoscuntur a sensu (*ibid.*).

Note again Scotus' insistence on the epistemological significance of intuitive cognition—it is necessary for what we would call



"subjective verification" of contingent truths. At the same time, the fact that we know and formulate contingent truths in propositions is a proof that we know the terms of these propositions by means of intellectual intuitive cognition.<sup>68</sup> This brief statement of evidence is merely a repetition of the conclusion of a detailed argument elaborated in the Second Book of the *Oxonienne*. Though Scotus is speaking there of angelic intellects, it is permissible, in view of the above text, to transfer the argument to the human intellect—especially in view, also, of Scotus' contention (in opposition to St. Thomas) that human and angelic intellects are not specifically different,<sup>69</sup> and in view of his express assertion that the kind of cognition we are here concerned with is not incompatible with a created intellect (and hence compatible with the human intellect).

To have a knowledge of a singular, as singular, he says is not impropportionate to or incompatible with a created intellect. But such a knowledge of a singular cannot be derived from the universal (*ex ratione universalis*), for this nature, precisely as "this" nature, is not contained determinately in the universal concept:

... potest cognoscere hoc singulare ut hoc, quia haec cognitio non est improporcionata, nec repugnat intellectui creato. Sed non potest cognoscere singulare ut hoc, ex ratione universalis; probo, quia haec natura ut haec, non continetur determinate, scilicet ut haec, sub universalitate (*Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 11, n. 11; XII, 278).<sup>70</sup>

Now from the knowledge of quiddities and universals it is impossible to know a proposition expressing a contingent fact, for quiddities and universals pertain to scientific knowledge only,

<sup>68</sup> This text also shows that, at this time at least, there was no doubt in Scotus' mind concerning the actuality of intuitive cognition in our intellects *pro statu isto*. Cfr. our comments on *Quodl.* q. 13, and the detailed discussion of this whole problem *infra*.

<sup>69</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* II, d. 1, q. 5 (XI, 185 *et seq.*).

<sup>70</sup> This text occurs in one of the questions which do not belong in the authentic *Oxonienne*; but it is authentic as regards Scotus' thought (cfr. Introductory Notes at the beginning of this section).

and scientific knowledge is concerned with necessary propositions, and not with contingent ones.<sup>71</sup> But the existence or non-existence of things is contingent (here speaks the *Christian* philosopher); therefore a knowledge of quiddities and universals is not sufficient to know that a singular or an individual exists—to know, for example, that this particular individual whom we call Socrates is actually running at this particular time:

ex notitia quidditatum et universalium, quae scilicet sunt necessaria, non potest cognosci complexio contingens. Sed existentiae rerum vel non existentiae sunt contingentes; ergo non sufficit habere notitiam quidditatum et universalium, ad hoc quod cognoscat hoc singulare esse, puta hunc Socratem currere (*ibid.*).

It is necessary to base our universal knowledge, therefore, on a knowledge (which is received from things) of the actual existence or non-existence of things and also on a knowledge of the accidents that are required for their existence or non-existence:

adhuc necessario habetur accipere notitiam existentiae actualis rei, vel non existentiae, et etiam accidentium notitiam, quae requiruntur ad existentiam vel non existentiam a rebus (*ibid.*).

This knowledge of the existence of things, received from the things themselves and not from universal concepts or representations of things,<sup>72</sup> is by definition intuitive cognition. If, as has been shown here, such cognition is necessary for a knowledge

<sup>71</sup> Cfr. the Rational Proof for Abstractive Cognition (*supra*) as found in *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9 (XII, 212b).

<sup>72</sup> St. Thomas would agree with Scotus that universal concepts are not sufficient to give us knowledge of contingent truths, but instead of realizing that this fact leads necessarily to the idea of intuitive cognition he sought to explain our knowledge of contingent facts by basing our knowledge of material singulars on a mysterious "*conversio ad phantasma*". Scotus' reasoning here exposes one of the weaknesses inherent in such an explanation, for the phantasm is merely a representation of a thing and as such is indifferent to the thing's existence or non-existence. The phantasm remains the same even if the thing represented in it ceases to exist.

of contingent truths, we are forced to conclude that, since we do have knowledge of contingent truths, we must also have the kind of knowledge which alone makes this possible—i.e., intuitive cognition.

This same line of reasoning is more briefly stated in *Oxon.* III, d. 14, q. 3, n. 5: Just as a universal concept does not express the total entity of singular things, so also it does not express their total knowable content:

(species quidditatum) non sunt rationes cognoscendi universale sub propriis rationibus; sicut enim universale non dicit totam entitatem singularium, sic nec cognoscibilitatem, et ita quod est propria ratio cognoscendi universale non est propria ratio cognoscendi proprie et distincte singulare (*loc. cit.*, XIV, 524b).

This seems to imply that a *species* representing the quiddity of a thing is not sufficient for intuitive cognition, since intuitive cognition is excluded from the conceptual order<sup>73</sup> and must therefore be limited to the real order where all things are individual or singular. If, therefore, a *species* representing the quiddity of a thing is not sufficient for knowing a singular *proprie et distincte*, it is not sufficient for intuitive cognition. In any case, abstractive cognition does not convey a knowledge of the actual existence and presence of an object. How then would it be possible, using the data obtained from abstractive cognition alone, to form a judgment such as "Socrates is running"? The fact that we can and do form such judgments argues to the existence of another mode of cognition which puts us in touch with these temporal and spatial qualifications of an object which abstractive cognition, of its very nature, is unable to encompass. That other mode of cognition is called "intuitive" and is a fact of everyday experience.

In our discussion of the *Quodlibeta* we noted that Scotus did not commit himself beyond the order of *possibility* when formulating proofs for the fact that our intellects enjoy intuitive cognition in this life. We have already examined passages from the

<sup>73</sup> Cfr. Conclusion 8 in our *Quodlibeta* List.



*Oxonienne* which show that this use of *propositiones de possibili* cannot be construed as a denial of the same propositions in the mode *de inesse*. In *Oxon.* IV, d. 49, we find even more striking confirmation of this contention. It will be recalled that the "Proof *per simile*" was formulated in the *Quodlibeta* as follows:

Quidquid est perfectionis in cognitione magis *potest* competere cognitioni intellectivae quam sensitivae . . . ergo intellectus (noster) *potest* habere actum, quo sic attingat obiectum in sua reali existentia (q. 13; XXV, 521) . . . talem autem actum cognitionis de existente ut existens et praesens est, habet Angelus . . . ergo ista intellectio est *possibilis simpliciter* intellectivae nostrae (q. 6; XXV, 244).

In *Oxon.* IV, d. 49, Scotus does not formulate his premisses in the order of possibility but in the order of actuality. From this follows a conclusion *de inesse*:

. . . quod est simpliciter perfectionis in aliquo genere, si competit inferiori in illo genere, *competit* et superiori; sed cognitio intuitiva *competit* sensui; ergo multo magis intellectui (*loc. cit.*, q. 8, n. 5; XXI, 306b).

Just as succinct and to the point is the following:

quia cognitio intuitiva competit sensui circa obiectum suum; ergo et intellectui circa obiectum suum (*Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 12, n. 3; XXI, 440b).

The evidence in favour of intuitive cognition piles up when we turn from the world of sense and consider our interior acts—acts of our will, of our consciousness, of our emotions. If we did not have intuitive cognition we would not and could not know with certitude that such acts are in us and of us:

si non haberemus de aliquo cognitionem intuitivam, non sciremus de actibus nostris si insunt nobis, vel non, certitudinaliter (de actibus dico intrinsicis), sed hoc est falsum; ergo, etc. (*Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 8, n. 5; XXI, 306b).<sup>74</sup>

<sup>74</sup> This is perhaps the shortest proof of all, but it is by no means the least important. So much is implied in this brief statement that we shall

Note again the epistemological significance of intuitive cognition. It is absolutely necessary for *certitude* regarding our intrinsic acts. As we saw before, it is also necessary for certitude regarding the existence of objects presented to us by the senses. If then for this reason (scil. to guarantee certitude) we say that *one* being or object can be known intuitively, we must grant that *any* being or object can be known in the same manner (not even excluding God, the Supreme Being who, as we saw in the *Quodlibeta*, is known intuitively in the Beatific Vision):

eadem ratione qua ponis unum ens posse intuitive cognosci, et quodcumque (*ibid.*).

Totum ens creatum est obiectum proportionatum tali (scil. "creato") intellectui, quantum ad cognitionem tam abstractivam quam intuitivam; non enim differt intuitiva ab abstractiva, nisi propter praesentiam obiecti aliam et aliam; quidquid ergo potest esse obiectum proportionatum intellectui in hac praesentia, et in illa. Si ergo quodcumque ens potest abstractivae cognosci a tali intellectu, quando est sibi praesens uno modo, sequitur quod potest intuitive intelligi ab eodem, quando est sibi perfecte praesens in propria existentia actuali (*Oxon.* IV, d. 10, q. 8, n. 5; XVII, 287a).

Finally, Scotus emphatically and consistently maintains that intuitive cognition is more perfect *ex genere suo* than abstractive cognition. The following texts are samples of his considered opinion on this point:

Nulla cognitio abstractiva alicuius obiecti perfectior est cognitione intuitiva (*Oxon.* II, d. 9, q. 2, n. 19; XII, 454a);

Omnis intellectio abstractiva et non intuitiva est aliquo modo imperfecta (*Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 7, n. 42; VIII, 597b);

Cognitio alicuius in simili tantum, sive in universali, non est cognitio perfectissima et intuitiva ipsius rei in se (*ibid.*, d. 2, q. 3, n. 2; VIII, 488b);

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reserve discussion of it to a special section later. We may note here, however, that it is one of the most cogent proofs yet given, and absolutely typical of Scotistic psychology.

Visibile est perfectius cognoscibili non visibili, sed tantum intelligibili abstractivae (*ibid.*, d. 2, q. 2; VIII, 480).

Moreover, abstractivae and intuitive cognition are *specifically* distinct, because the (partial) cause of one is specifically distinct from the (partial) cause of the other. A *species* concurs with the intellect to cause abstractivae cognition, whereas the object *present in itself* (and not in any *species* or similitude) concurs with the intellect to cause intuitive cognition:

actus abstractivus et intuitivus differunt specie, quia aliud est ibi movens; hic enim movet species similis rei; ibi autem movet res praesens in se (*Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 12, n. 6; XXI, 442b).

## 2. *Reportata Parisiensia*

The reader must bear in mind the limitations imposed on us by the peculiar textual condition of the Wadding-Vivès edition of the *Reportata Parisiensia* (cfr. Introductory Notes to this section). Compared with the *Oxonienae* and the *Quodlibeta* it is of relatively small importance for our purpose. Yet it reveals one point that may be significant. We discovered in the *Quodlibeta* an emphasis on the *distinction* between intuitive and abstractivae, coupled with a development of proofs for intuitive cognition which seemed consciously to avoid a commitment beyond the order of possibility. In the *Oxonienae* Scotus followed the same pattern of developing both distinctions and proofs, but in the Fourth Book he couched his proofs very definitely in terms of the actual order. In the *Reportata Parisiensia* we find very little about the distinction and no strict proofs at all. This *may* be an indication that the idea of intuitive cognition was a novelty to Parisian ears *at this time*.

In the *Rep. Par.* we find the usual distinction between intuitive and abstractivae cognition:



. . . duplex est cognitio; quaedam quidem est per speciem, quae est rei non in se praesentis, et haec vocatur cognitio rei abstractiva; alia est cognitio rei ut habet esse in actuali existentia, et haec dicitur cognitio intuitiva (*op. cit.*, Prolog. q. 2, n. 15; XXII, 41b).

This is followed by a passing reference reminiscent of the "Proof *per simile*" of the *Oxonien*se and the *Quodlibeta*:

Et haec duplex cognitio patere potest in cognitionibus potentialium sensitivarum; visus enim apprehendit visibile ut existit actualiter, et huic correspondet cognitio intuitiva intellectus. Phantasia vero sive imaginatio apprehendit illud visibile per speciem repraesentantem in absentia rei, quamvis non sit sibi praesens in actuali existentia, et huic correspondet cognitio abstractiva intellectus (*ibid.*).

What is of particular interest in the first text quoted is the implication that no *species* enters into intuitive cognition. This agrees with Scotus' express teaching in the *Oxonien*se:

ista cognitio (scil. intuitiva) non est per aliquam speciem vel habitum, qui possit esse de re non existente . . . ista enim (scil. cognitio intuitiva) non potest haberi per speciem obiecti quae manere potest, obiecto absente (*Oxon.* II, d. 9, q. 2; XII, 453-4 and 503).

However, later on in the *Reportata Parisiensia* Scotus does not seem to be quite so sure. He says that a separated soul acquires knowledge of hitherto unknown objects without any reference to the phantasm—i.e., the agent intellect abstracts immediately from the object. Then, in parentheses, he says: "And *perhaps* it is always thus in all intuitive cognition":

Unde credo quod modo intellectus agens abstrahit immediate a re extra, non a phantasmate, et forte ita semper est in omni cognitione intuitiva (*op. cit.*, IV, d. 45, q. 2, n. 20; XXIV, 567a).<sup>75</sup>

This is another of those problems that we shall discuss separately at the end of this section.

<sup>75</sup> The word "*modo*" cannot mean "now" in the sense of a soul *in statu viae*. From the context it is clear that it refers to a separated soul.

For the reasons already given (unreliability of the text as we have it and relative unimportance of the material referring to our subject) the *Reportata Parisiensia* does not merit any further special consideration. Other texts from this work have been and will be used only as confirmatory evidence or as *passim* references.

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SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE OXONIENSE

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1. We find the same definition of abstractive and intuitive cognition as in the *Quodlibeta* (*Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9, n. 6; XII, 212b—cfr. Concl. 2 in *Quodlibeta* List).<sup>76</sup>

2. When we know an object intuitively we know: (a) the quiddity of the thing known, and this under the aspect of its existence, and (b) we know an object which is present, this knowledge being specified by the fact that it grasps the existential notes of the object known. The presence or absence of this existential qualification in our knowledge is the only thing that distinguishes intuitive from abstractive cognition (*ibid.*—cfr. Concls. 12, 7, 8 in *Quodlibeta* List).

3. Hence the difference between intuitive and abstractive cognition is not specified by the object known, but by the way in which it is known (*ibid.*—cfr. Concls. 4 and 6 in *Quodlibeta* List).

4. The absence of any discursive process is not the chief characteristic of intuitive cognition, because abstractive cognition is also non-discursive, since both modes of cognition are limited to the level of simple apprehension (*ibid.*—cfr. Concl. 1 in *Quodlibeta* List).

5. Both abstractive and intuitive cognition can be distinct knowledge (*ibid.*).

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<sup>76</sup> The expressions "Oxonienese List" and "Quodlibeta List" will henceforth be used to refer to this Summary of Conclusions and the corresponding one at the end of our analysis of the *Quodlibeta*.

6. There are two kinds of intuitive cognition: (a) perfect and (b) imperfect. Perfect intuitive cognition is that by which an object is known as existing and as present to me (i.e., in the sense in which intuitive cognition is usually defined). Imperfect intuitive cognition is an opinion concerning the past (*Oxon.* III, d. 14, q. 3, n. 4; XIV, 527a). Imperfect intuitive cognition of the past is also called "habitual intuitive cognition" (*ibid.*, 528b).

7. Both a common nature, as it precedes singularity, and a singular as singular (*singulare ut hoc*) can be known by intuitive cognition (*ibid.*, 524a—cfr. Concl. 2 above and Concl. 12 in Quodlibeta List).

8. But knowledge of singulars as singular is not the essential characteristic of intuitive cognition. What distinguishes intuitive cognition from any other kind is the fact that it gives us knowledge and certitude of the existence of the object known and is, in fact, indispensable in order that we may have such certitude (*Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 2, n. 12; XX, 305a and *Rep. Par.* IV, d. 45, q. 3; XXIV, 575-6).

9. Our intellect knows sensible things and even our own sensations by intuitive cognition (*Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 3, n. 17; XX, 348b-349a).

10. Intuitive cognition is necessary for "subjective verification" of contingent truths (*ibid.*).

11. The human intellect has intuitive cognition in this life (*pro statu isto or in statu viae*). This is expressly stated in *Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 12, n. 3; XXI, 440b. It is implied in the following assertions: (i) that intuitive cognition is necessary to give us certitude regarding the existence of any object (*Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 2, n. 12; XX, 305a); (ii) that intuitive cognition is necessary for a knowledge of contingent propositions and the facts expressed in such propositions (*Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 3, n. 17; XX, 348b-349a—cfr. also *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 11, n. 11; XII, 278b, which is one of the questions that do not belong to the genuine *Ordinatio Scoti* but is nevertheless authentic as to doctrine); (iii) that intuitive cognition is necessary in order that we may know with certitude that our interior acts are in us (*Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 8, n. 5; XXI, 306b).



12. Any and every being *can* be known by intuitive cognition (*Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 8, n. 5; XXI, 306b, and *Oxon.* IV, d. 10, q. 8, n. 5; XVII, 287a—cfr. Concl. 12 in Quodlibeta List).

13. It is significant that all positive statements to the effect that our intellects have intuitive cognition in this life are found in the Fourth Book of the *Oxonien*se.

14. Abstractive and intuitive cognition are specifically distinct (*Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 12, n. 6; XXI, 442b), and intuitive cognition is more perfect than abstractive cognition (*Oxon.* II, d. 9, q. 2, n. 19; XII, 454a, and *Oxon.* I, d. 2, q. 7, n. 42; VIII, 578b, etc.).

15. *Proofs for abstractive and intuitive cognition*:—  
The fact of ABSTRACTIVE cognition is proved:

*per rationem*—from the nature of scientific knowledge (*Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9, n. 6; XII, 212b—cfr. *Rep. Par.* II, d. 3, q. 3; XXII, 529b. This parallels the proof “a posteriori” in *Quodl.* qq. 6 and 13).

The *possibility* of INTUITIVE cognition is proved:

- (a) *per simile* (*Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9, n. 6; XII, 212b. This parallels the proof in *Quodl.* q. 6);
- (b) from the nature of the Beatific Vision (*ibid.*; cfr. *Quodl.* qq. 6 & 13).

The *actuality* of INTUITIVE cognition (i.e., the fact that we do have intuitive cognition) is proved:

- (a) *per simile* (*ibid.*, and *Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 8, n. 5; XXI, 306b; also *Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 12, n. 3; XXI, 440b);
- (b) from our knowledge of contingent propositions (*Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 3, n. 17; XX, 348b-349a and *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 11, n. 11; XII, 278b);
- (c) from the fact that intuitive cognition is necessary to give us certitude of the existence of any known object (*Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 2, n. 12; XX, 305a);

To the list of “problems” discovered in the *Quodlibeta* we may add two more, to be discussed under the headings: *knowledge of singulars* and *knowledge of our own soul and its interior acts*.

## SECTION 3 — MINIOR WORKS

1. *Collationes*:

There are 39 *Collationes* in the Vivès edition (vol. V, pp. 129-317). According to Fr. Balic there are 46 authentic *Collationes*, of which 19 were held at Paris; the remaining 27 were all probably held at Oxford (cfr. C. Balic, "De Collationibus Joannis Duns Scoti Doctoris Subtilis ac Mariani", *Bogoslovni Vestnik* IX, 1929, pp. 185-219). Of the 19 Parisian *Collationes* the Vivès edition contains 17 (nos. 1-2, 6-11, 17, 18, 20, 36-39). Both Balic (*loc. cit.*) and Harris (*Duns Scotus*, Oxford, 1927, Vol. II, pp. 361-378) have independently edited the other two (nos. 18 and 19, according to Balic's numeration). Of the 7 *Collationes* not found in the Vivès edition, one is to be found in the same edition of the *Quaestiones Miscellaneae* (q. 1; V, 338-353). Of the remaining six, 3 have been edited by Balic (*loc. cit.*) and the same three have been edited by Harris (*loc. cit.*). But Harris has also edited two other *Collationes* (nos. 40 and 42 according to Balic's numeration). Therefore only one of the original 46 *Collationes* is not yet available in a printed edition (namely, no. 43 according to Balic's numeration).

Luke Wadding remarks that these *Collationes* are cited by very few scholars prior to his time, despite the fact that they are learned and mature pieces of writing (cfr. R. P. F. Lucae Waddingi *Censura* in ed. Vivès, V, 129). Even modern scholars have failed to make adequate use of these important documents.

The Scholia in the Vives ed. are by Hugo Cavellus (for *Coll.* I-XXXV) and Wadding (*Coll.* XXXVI-XXXIX).

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From our point of view the *Collationes* are interesting in as much as those held at Paris contain several open allusions to intuitive cognition. They contain no new information but are

interesting witnesses of consistency in Scotus' teaching. Here we find the usual distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition:

Differentia est inter cognitionem intuitivam et abstractivam, quod cognitio abstractiva, quae est per speciem, non est rei, ut est existens, nec ut praesens est, sed indifferenter potest esse rei absentis et praesentis, sicut et species, in qua repraesentatur obiectum, ut relucet; sed cognitio intuitiva est rei existentis, ut existens est (*Coll.* XXXVI, n. 11; V, 301b).

Cognitio intuitiva differt a cognitione abstractiva in hoc, quod abstractiva abstrahit ab existentia rei, quia potest esse de re absente, sicut praesente, cum sit per speciem aequaliter essentialiter repraesentantem rem absentem sicut praesentem; sed cognitio rei intuitiva est de re, ut praesens est (*Coll.* XX, n. 2; V, 227a).

What is especially significant in these texts is the implication that no *species* enters into intuitive cognition.

Finally, Scotus again reminds us that intuitive cognition is the perfect form of cognition:

omnis cognitio non intuitiva est imperfecta (*Coll.* 18, ed. Balic, p. 207).

## 2. *Quaestiones in Metaphysicam*:

The full title of this work is *Quaestiones Subtilissimae super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*. It is unquestionably authentic, but must not be confused with the spurious *Metaphysica Textualis* (cfr. Grajewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 174 and 180). Only the first nine books of the *QQ. in Met.* are authentic (Vives ed., VII, 1-620). The tenth and twelfth books (eleven is missing) printed in the Vives ed. are definitely spurious.

It is customary to say that this work belongs to Scotus' very earliest period. Actually, however, a very good case can be made out for the view that this work is one of his latest. Though I incline to this latter view, I shall make allowances for both



opinions in the discussions that follow. The text as we have it today is in a deplorable condition and should therefore be used with the greatest caution. The *Annotationes* of Mauritius de Portu (which are printed with it in the Vives ed.) are often very helpful in this connection and should always be read in conjunction with the text itself. Another difficulty arises from the fact that here, as in the *Theoremata*, many of the questions are aporetic rather than didactic—i.e., they are a discussion of problems, often without a definitive solution. For this reason it is often difficult to decide what is Scotus' own opinion and what is not. The advice which Mauritius de Portu gives concerning one passage in this work should be applied to the whole: "Pertransibis lento passu illud chaos metaphysicale Scoticum" (*Annotatio* in *Met.* VII, q. 12; VII, 429a).

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This work is of special significance for the problem: What is the connection between intuitive cognition and our knowledge of singulars? Those passages which refer to this problem specifically will be examined later in the special section devoted to this question. For the present we shall limit ourselves to a discussion of those texts which deal with more general aspects of intuitive and abstractive cognition.

In q. 3 of the Second Book there is an interesting passage which illustrates our remarks on the difficulty of interpreting this work as a whole. A description of intuitive and abstractive cognition is given:

Notandum quod in sensu est una cognitio intuitiva, primo propria; alia primo et per se propria per speciem, sed non intuitiva . . . exemplum de primo, visus videt colorem. De secundo, phantasia imaginatur colorem (*loc. cit.*, n. 19; VII, 110a).

This is clear enough, and corresponds to the descriptions of intuitive and abstractive cognition found in other works. But the following paragraph comes as a surprise:

In intellectu notitia visionis vel intuitiva, quae est prima cognitio, non est in via possibilis.

How reconcile that with the clear statements to the contrary in the *Oxoniense* particularly?

As Mauritius de Portu points out, the context demands that we interpret this only as denying that it is possible for our intellects to know *separated substances* by intuitive cognition in this life. Further, this whole passage seems to be either an *Additio* or an objection; and in neither case is it the opinion of Scotus himself. For a little later in the same question the same matter is repeated in better order and the denial of intuitive cognition *in via* is changed to this:

De primo gradu, scilicet intuitivae cognitionis, an sit in intellectu in via dubium est, videtur tamen quod sic (*ibid.*, n. 23; p. 112b).

Even this, however, is not to be understood as a statement of Scotus' own opinion. The whole context shows that he is merely discussing the problem here without offering a definite solution of his own.

Bearing this restriction in mind, it is interesting to note that the common Scotistic notions of intuitive cognition are developed in the course of this aporetic discussion. Thus we find the standard definition of intuitive cognition and the usual implication that a *species* is not necessary for its production:

Primus (gradus) est intuitivae cognitionis, quae est de re praesente, non tantum per speciem, nec tantum sub ratione cognoscibilis, sed in propria natura (*ibid.*).

We also find one of the standard proofs for intuitive cognition (the "Proof *per simile*" of the *Oxoniense* and *Quodlibeta*):

quidquid perfectionis simpliciter est in inferiori ponendum, videtur ponendum in superiori, et perfectionis simpliciter est in cognitione sensitiva, quod cognoscit aliquid inquantum praesens est per essentiam; ergo huiusmodi cognitio videtur hic competere intellectui (*ibid.*, p. 113a).

We can at least conclude that the basic notions and the basic problems of intuitive cognition were clear in Scotus' mind when he wrote the *QQ. in Metaphysicam*. If, as is generally believed, this work belongs to his earliest period, it follows that these basic notions did not change appreciably during the whole course of his intellectual development. Whether or not particular applications of these notions underwent a change is a question to be decided later.

### 3. *De Primo Principio*:

This is the only work of Scotus that has appeared so far in a modern critical edition. It was edited by Fr. Marianus Muller, O.F.M., in 1941 and published under the title: *Ioannis Duns Scoti Tractatus de Primo Principio* (Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder & Co.). Previously this work had been quoted under different titles—e.g., *De Primo Omnium Rerum Principio*, *De Primo Rerum Principio*, etc. There is manuscript evidence for all three of these titles. In any case, care should be taken not to confuse this work with the *De Rerum Principio* which was for a long time attributed to Scotus but has now been shown to be the work of Vital de Four and Godfrey de Fontaines (cfr. Grajewski, *op. cit.*, p. 175).

Unfortunately the new edition of Fr. Muller is not entirely satisfactory (cfr. our review in *Franciscan Studies* VI, 1946, 226-230). For the sake of readers who do not have access to this new edition we shall supplement our references to it by citing also the corresponding reference to the Vives ed. (Vol. IV, pp. 721-799; scholia by Cavellus, Annotations by Mauritius de Portu).

This tract is unquestionably the most magnificent treatise on Natural Theology produced by the Middle Ages. It is a more systematic development of similar ideas presented in the *Oxonien* (especially in *Oxon. I*, d. 2, qq. 1-3; VIII, 393 *et seq.*). It contains several references to intuitive cognition, not the least important of which is the statement that Scotus has written *much* about intuitive cognition in other works.<sup>77</sup> This is signi-

<sup>77</sup> Cfr. ch. 4, concl. 9 (ed. Müller, p. 97; ed. Vivès, p. 775a).



ficant in view of the dispute concerning the date of composition of the *De Primo Principio*. If Fr. Muller is right in considering it one of Scotus' earliest works (which we doubt very much), then this text is an indication that Scotus had developed his doctrine of intuitive cognition at the very beginning of his teaching career. If Frs. Longpre and Balic are correct in their belief that the *De Primo Principio* was written after the first book of the *Oxonienae*, this text is additional evidence for the fact that Scotus retained his doctrine of intuitive cognition during the middle period of his intellectual development. These facts, taken in conjunction with what we have learned from the *Quodlibeta* and the *QQ. in Metaphysicam*, show that, whatever the outcome of various attempts to date the different works of Scotus may be, the doctrine of intuitive cognition must be considered an integral part of his doctrine over a wide period of his teaching career.

In ch. 4, concl. 9 Scotus tells us that:

notitia cuiuscumque nata est gigni ab ipso, sicut a causa proxima, et maxima illa quae est visio (ed. Muller, p. 95; ed. Vives, p. 774a).

This definitely states that intuitive cognition (*visio*) is caused by the object as "*causa maxime proxima*". This could mean that no *species impressa* or *intelligibilis* intervenes between the object and the intellect in intuitive cognition.

With regard to the relative perfection of intuitive and abstractive cognition Scotus clearly states that intuitive cognition is more perfect:

cognitio per simile est tantum cognitio in universali . . .  
Haec etiam cognitio in universali non est intuitiva sed abstractiva; et intuitiva est perfectior (ch. 4, concl. 11: ed. Muller, p. 131-2; ed. Vivès, p. 788a).

This text also equates "*cognitio per simile*" with abstractive cognition, to the exclusion of intuitive cognition. Since *cognitio per speciem* is the same as *cognitio per simile*, we have here a

very definite exclusion of a *species* from intuitive cognition. This is brought out even more clearly in one of the *Additiones*:<sup>78</sup>

species intelligibilis est causa proxima intellectionis abstractivae, causa obiecti est causa valde remota. Sit illa A, causatum cognoscibile B, phantasma C, species intelligibilis D, intellectio abstractiva E, visio aliud C; patet processus (*Add.* 6a: ed. Müller, p. 162; ed. Vivès, p. 775a).

According to this schematic representation Scotus differentiates between intuitive and abstractive cognition is based on the following elements:

1. The knowable object—B;
2. the phantasm—C;
3. a *species intelligibilis*—D.

The net result of this process is abstractive intellection—E. In intuitive cognition, however, there is only one of *these* elements, namely, the knowable object—B. This immediately causes intuitive cognition, which is designated, not as F, as we might expect, but as "*aliud C*"—i.e., intuitive cognition is not dependent on the phantasm and a *species intelligibilis*, but only on the object *immediately*.<sup>79</sup>

#### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE MINOR WORKS

Our examination of these three "minor works" (minor only insofar as they throw little light on the question of intuitive cog-

<sup>78</sup> There are ten *Additiones* to the *De Primo Principio*. No single MS. has all of these additions, and different MSS. have them in different places. Fr. Muller concludes, however, that all of them are authentic; but because it is difficult to decide just where they should be incorporated into the text he has printed them separately in an Appendix.

<sup>79</sup> It is interesting to observe that the Wadding-Vivès edition classifies intuitive cognition (*visio*) as "F" where Müller's edition reads "*aliud C*". There is absolutely no MSS. evidence for anything but "*aliud C*". The reading of the Wadding-Vivès edition can therefore be construed only as an interpretative reading, inspired by the belief that Scotus must have meant "F", although he wrote "*aliud C*". This interpretation reflects the difficulty that must have been experienced in believing that Scotus could have conceived that intuitive cognition did not require the intervention of the phantasm or a *species intelligibilis*.

dition) shows that there is a remarkable continuity between them and the "major" works, both as regards the basic notions of intuitive cognition and the problematical aspects of those notions.

1. The usual distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition and the usual description or definition of intuitive cognition are found in *Coll. XXXVI* (V, 301b), *Coll. XX* (V, 227a) and in *QQ. in Met.* II, q. 3 (VII, 110a and 112b).

2. The implication that no *species* is required for intuitive cognition is found in *Coll. XXXVI* (V, 301b), *QQ. in Met.* II, q. 3 (VII, 112b) and especially in *De Primo Princ.* ch. 4 (ed. Müller, pp. 95 and 131-2; ed. Vivès, IV, 744a and 788a) and *Additio* 6a (ed. Müller, p. 162).

3. One of the standard proofs for intuitive cognition (the "proof *per simile*") is mentioned in *QQ. in Met.* II, q. 3 (VII, 112b).

4. Intuitive cognition is said to be more perfect than abstractive cognition in *Coll.* 18 (ed. Balic, p. 207) and in *De Primo Princ.* ch. 4 (ed. Müller, p. 131-2; ed. Vivès, IV, 788a).

### C. *Special Problems—Dubia.*

DUBIUM I: For an object to be known intuitively, must it be both present and existing?

Scotus usually defines intuitive cognition of an object as an act whereby we know a thing as existing and present. In other words, the terms "existing" and "present" usually appear in his definitions in conjunction. Are we to infer from this that both members of the conjunction must be realized before we have intuitive cognition of a given object? Or, to state the problem more specifically, is it possible to have intuitive cognition (a) of an object which exists but is not present to the observer, or (b) of an object which actually does not exist?<sup>80</sup>

Scotus does not consider this problem *ex professo* at all. But it has bothered some of his commentators and it is important in

<sup>80</sup> Scotus holds that an object which is present to the observer but not actually existing can only be known by abstractive cognition. For, in such a case, the object is not present in its own proper existence, but is present only in a diminished similitude—e.g., in a *species*.



view of later developments in the doctrine of intuitive cognition.<sup>81</sup> Let us therefore review what evidence we possess.

First of all, there is the fact that Scotus usually insists on both presence and existence of the object known intuitively. For example, in the *Quodlibeta* he says:

(intellectio intuitiva) . . . est intuitio rei ut existentis et praesentis (q. 6; XXV, 244b).

In the *Oxonienne* we find even stronger formulations:

Potest enim esse aliqua cognitio obiecti . . . secundum quod existens et secundum quod praesens (*Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9; XII, 212);

Visio (i.e., cognitio intuitiva) est existentis ut existens est, et ut praesens est videnti secundum existentiam suam, et in hoc distinguitur visio ab intellectione abstractiva, quia potest esse non existentis vel existentis, non inquantum in se praesens (*Oxon.* I, d. 1, q. 2, n. 3; VIII, 319-20).

And this is his usual practise. But there are texts which omit one or the other of the two qualifications "existing" and "present". For example, in *Oxon.* I, d. 8, q. 4, n. 15 (IX, 654a) he says:

Intellectus intuitivus nullam habet distinctionem in obiecto, nisi secundum quod existens est . . .

Are we to infer that the actual presence of the object is not necessary? In the *Collationes* he goes to the other extreme and omits the qualification of existence, insisting only on the presence of the object:

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<sup>81</sup> For example, the charge of scepticism was hurled against Ockham because he taught (as did Suarez and others) that God could, under extraordinary circumstances, cause in us intuitive cognition of a non-existing object; cfr. Fr. Philotheus Boehner's discussion of Ockham's teaching on this point in "The Notitia Intuitiva of Non-existents according to William Ockham", *Traditio* I (1943), 223 et seq., and "In Propria Causa", *Franciscan Studies*, XXVI (New Series vol. V, 1945), 37-54. We shall discuss this problem in detail in ch. 3.

attingere obiectum ut praesens, est ipsum attingere cognitione intuitiva (*Coll.* XI, n. 1; V, 187a); cognitio intuitiva differt a cognitione abstractiva in hoc, quod abstractiva abstrahit ab existentia rei . . . sed cognitio intuitiva est de re, ut praesens est, *Coll.* XX, n. 2; V, 227a).

The same idea is expressed in the *Oxonienne*:

non enim differt intuitiva ab abstractiva, nisi propter praesentiam obiecti aliam et aliam (*Oxon.* IV, d. 10, q. 8: XVII, 287a).

This problem attracted the attention of at least two of the Scotistic commentators—Antonius Hiquaeus (Hickey) and Hugo Cavellus. What we are considering as a textual difficulty is placed in its wider historical setting by Cavellus when he notes that Suarez, Vasquez, Molina, Buridan and Ockham think it possible for God to cause intuitive cognition of an object in our intellects, even though the object thus known be not actually present to us.<sup>82</sup> Hickey is more the textual critic and is concerned with the fact that Scotus seems to contradict himself. In his commentary on *Oxon.* IV, d. 10, q. 5, n. 4 (XVII, 258a) he says:

Hic videtur asserere ad cognitionem intuitivam non requiri obiectum terminativum praesens. Contra docet in variis locis . . .

His solution of this apparent contradiction is that Scotus is here speaking of intuitive cognition in a broad sense, so as to take into account the distinction between perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition. Therefore, when Scotus says that the presence of an object is not required as a *terminus* of intuitive cognition, we must understand him as referring to imperfect intuitive cognition.

<sup>82</sup> Cfr. *Supplementum ad QQ. J. Duns Scoti in libros de Anima* by Hugo Cavellus, Disp. III, sect. ix (ed. Vivès, vol. III, p. 742 et seq.). Actually Ockham goes even farther than this when he admits the possibility of (supernaturally caused or conserved) intuitive cognition of non-existents. The solution of this larger problem will be given when we consider Ockham's teaching on intuitive cognition. Here we shall limit ourselves to the problem in Scotus.

This is an important point to bear in mind. But more important still is Scotus' own solution of the problem in the very text that Hickey is analysing. Scotus clearly solved the *dubium* thus:

non oportet obiectum in se esse praesens propter terminationem actus, sed tantum propter causationem, ita quod quando est aliqua causa sufficiens ipsius actus, non requiritur praesentia obiecti propter terminationem, sicut patet de vidente creaturam in essentia divina; si essentia esset causa illius visionis, non requiritur illud obiectum ad quod terminatur haec visio praesens propria praesens propria praesentialitate (*loc. cit.*)

The first part of this text allows of Hickey's interpretation—insofar as Scotus says that the actual presence of an object is not required for the termination of (imperfect) intuitive cognition, but is required as a cause of the (perfect) intuitive cognition which must precede imperfect intuitive cognition. But the second part of the text justifies Cavellus' contention that Scotus agrees in principle with Ockham, Vasquez, etc., when they admit the possibility of intuitive cognition of objects which are not present *propria praesentialitate*. But such an intuitive cognition is not given in the ordinary course of events. It can only be *given* (literally) by divine intervention in the natural order, and in the supernatural order is possible only if the presence of the object in the divine essence is supplied for the natural presence of the object which is usually required.

To sum up: Scotus usually requires *both* the presence and the existence of the object for *perfect* intuitive cognition. Neither the presence nor the actual existence of the object is required for *imperfect* intuitive cognition, though both would usually be necessary for the perfect intuitive cognition which is a prerequisite for the imperfect form. In extraordinary instances in the supernatural order (i.e., by divine intervention) it is *possible* to have intuitive cognition of an object, even though the object itself is not actually present in its own proper "presentiality".

DUBIUM 2: Is a species necessary (or even possible) for Intuitive cognition?



This is a problem that has exercised the ingenuity of Scotistic commentators for centuries. Some of them, in their efforts to solve what they consider contradictions in Scotus' writings, have themselves become involved in more formidable difficulties. For instance, Poncius, in his commentary on *Oxon.* III, d. 14, q. 4 (n. 15, XIV, 539b) notes that a serious problem is presented by Scotus' remark that in intuitive cognition "*obiectum non ut in specie agat sed ut in se praesens*".<sup>83</sup> He rightly interprets this as a denial of the intervention of a *species impressa* or *intelligibilis* in intuitive cognition. But he is troubled by the fact that such a denial would be contrary to Scotus' general principles. So he briefly reviews the evidence for and against such an interpretation, mentioning several places where Scotus says that intuitive cognition is given without the intervention of any *species* and trying to reconcile that with Scotus' assertion that acts of the external senses (especially of sight) are achieved by means of a *species* and are nevertheless called intuitive. Poncius then suggests the following solution: When Scotus says that intuitive cognition is not caused by a *species* he does not mean any every *species* but only a particular kind of *species*, namely, a *species* that represents an object in such a way that the mind cannot tell whether or not the object represented is present or absent, existing or not existing. He therefore concludes that there must be two kinds of *species*—one which represents an object precisely as existing and present, and one which is indifferent to these existential qualifications of things. The first causes intuitive cognition and the second causes abstractive cognition.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Cfr. Scotus, *loc. cit.*, p. 534a. The *Supplement* of Poncius begins here, and not with d. 34 as stated by M. Grajewski, "John Ponce, Franciscan Scotist of the Seventeenth Century", *Franciscan Studies*, 6 (1946), p. 67.

<sup>84</sup> Non est de ratione cognitionis intuitivae quod non fiat per speciem . . . est tamen de ratione visionis intuitivae ut non fiat per speciem quae absente obiecto, aut non existente, possit eam causare. Itaque duplex potest haberi de re aliqua species; una quae non possit nisi praesente et existente actualiter obiecto conservari et causare intellectionem; et tales sunt species sensuum externorum, nec huiusmodi ullo modo impediunt quominus cognitio per eas producta sit intuitiva, ac terminetur ad obiectum secundum esse proprium et immediate (*loc. cit.*, p. 540a).

There are several difficulties in this solution, not the least important of which is the fact that nowhere does Scotus mention more than one kind of *species*. Moreover, two *species* complicates a question which is already so involved that it is almost meaningless. If mediaeval philosophers who postulated only one kind of *species* were able to evolve so many divergent theories of abstraction how many more would not their modern disciples be able to evolve on the basis of two kinds of *species*. Then again, why admit two kinds of *species* when there is not sufficient evidence for even one?<sup>85</sup> And how could we possibly distinguish between these two kinds of *species* when we are not even conscious of the existence of one of them? Finally, if intuitive cognition is caused by such a *species* as Poncius postulates, how can Poncius maintain that intuitive cognition attains the object *immediately*?<sup>86</sup>

Such a solution contradicts what Scotus says of *species* in general—namely, that they are of their very nature indifferent to the existence or non-existence of the object they represent. In fact, it was precisely this indifference of *species* that led Scotus to postulate intuitive cognition in the first place.<sup>87</sup>

Hugo Cavellus is no more successful than Poncius in his attempt to solve this difficulty. He is of the opinion that Scotus himself was not sure of the answer. He suggests the following: whether or not a *species* accompanies intuitive cognition, at least the object concurs with the intellect “*vel totaliter vel partialiter immediate*”, and this concurrence of the object, he thinks, is sufficient to distinguish intuitive cognition from abstractive cognition, because such concurrence would make the *species* not a cause of intuition but only an *effectus praeivius*.<sup>88</sup> This solution

<sup>85</sup> Cfr. our discussion of difficulties in this regard in ch. 1 and Ockham's arguments against the *species* in ch. 3 *infra*.

<sup>86</sup> Cfr. n. 84 *supra*.

<sup>87</sup> Cfr. his proofs for intuitive cognition, references to which are listed in our Quodlibeta and Oxoniense Lists.

<sup>88</sup> Cfr. *Supplementum ad Q. J. Duns Scoti in libros de Anima* Disp. III, sect. ix (ed. Vivès, vol. III, p. 742a). Cavellus quotes this as the opinion of Bargius.

is no less amazing than that of Poncius, insofar as it admits even the possibility of partial immediacy! If the words "immediate" and "mediate" have any meaning at all in this connection, to say that there is a "partially immediate" concurrence of the object with the intellect is either a contradiction in terms or equivalent to an admission that there is a medium between the object and the intellect, namely, a *species*. And this brings us back to where we started from: if there is such a *species*, how can Scotus speak of intuitive cognition as an *immediate* contact with the object *in se*? In any case, the object concurs with the intellect even in abstractive cognition.

Lychetus was more realistic in his treatment of the problem. Commenting on *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9 he flatly states that any form of cognition that is dependent on a *species intelligibilis* is abstractive *only*:

Omnis cognitio per speciem intelligibilem est tantum abstractiva (*loc. cit.*, XII, 208b).

And this he believes to be the opinion of Scotus, for he quotes *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 6 and *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9 as corroborative evidence.

How then can Poncius say that Scotus taught that singulars are known intuitively by means of a *species* directly representing them to the intellect (Commentary on *Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 3; XX, 351b)? This not only contradicts what Lychetus believes to be the pure Scotistic position but it also does Scotus an injustice because the text on which this comment is based makes no mention of a *species* at all.

In his commentary on *Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 2 Poncius seems to be utterly confused, First of all he says that a *species* is impossible in intuitive cognition; then he seems to say that there is a special kind of *species* in intuitive cognition—namely, one which represents the object as existing. How can this be possible, since a *species* is supposed to be indifferent to the existence or non-existence of the object it represents?

The only benefit to be derived from a reading of Poncius' long and involved commentaries on this point is this: they provide us



with an excellent (though unintended) summary of the insoluble difficulties inherent in the *species* theory and they serve as evidence of the tenacity with which scholastics clung desperately to the Arabic-Aristotelian *mechanics* of cognition even when empirical and speculative evidence rendered it improbable.

We must realize, of course, that the Scotistic commentators labored under a peculiar disadvantage. Scotus himself did not fully reconcile the consequences of his doctrine of intuitive cognition with the Arabic-Aristotelian metaphysics of knowledge. His commentators felt that it was incumbent on them to do so. Perhaps they did not realize that their task was impossible. Perhaps if they had read Ockham sympathetically they would have realized it. In any case, their unsuccessful attempts at reconciliation are the best proof that such a reconciliation is impossible. The account of these attempts which we have given above is just a sample of the maze of contradictions in which they found themselves involved when they attempted the impossible. Later we hope to show that Ockham followed Scotus to a logical conclusion when he discarded the *species* theory entirely. For the time being, however, let us content ourselves with seeing what Scotus actually said about the necessity of a *species* for intuitive cognition—not what commentators thought he meant or should have said.

Both in the *Oxoniense* and in the *Quodlibeta* Scotus says that intuitive cognition gives *immediate* contact with object *in se*, while abstractive cognition does not attain the object *in se* but in a similitude:

Beatitudo (which is possible only by means of intuitive cognition) numquam habetur nisi ipsum obiectum beatificum *immediate in se* attingatur (*Quodl.* q. 6; XXV, 244b).

Causae sufficientes (cognitionis intuitivae intellectivae) sunt obiectum in actuali existentia praesens, et intellectus agens et possibilis . . . et ita, ut videtur, probatur quod necesse est *rem ipsam immediate* sufficere ad cognitionem intellectualem (intuitivam) habendam de ipsa, quia solum phantasma non sufficit ad cognitionem intuitivam obiecti quia phantasma repraesentat rem existentem vel non existentem, praesentem vel non praesentem; et per consequens per ipsum non potest

haberi cognitio de re ut existente et in propria existentia praesente (*Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 2, n. 12; XX, 305a).

Nec ista intuitio intellectiva vel intellectis intuitiva haberi potest per speciem praesentem, quia illa repraesentat rem indifferenter existentem vel non existentem, praesentem vel non praesentem (*ibid.*).

Sed ista cognitio (scil. intuitiva) non est per *aliquam* speciem, vel habitum, qui possit esse de re non existente (*Oxon.* II, d. 9, q. 2, n. 19; XII, 454a).

ista enim (scil. cognitio intuitiva) non potest haberi per speciem obiecti, quae manere potest, obiecto absente (*ibid.*, 503a).

Obiectum *in se praesens* . . . sufficit absque omni informatione (i.e., by a *species*), ad causandum visionem, vel *ex se solo* cum intellectu (*Oxon.* I, d. 17, q. 3, n. 36; X, 99a).

Actus abstractivus et intuitivus differunt specie, quia aliud et aliud est ibi movens; hic enim movet species similis rei (i.e., in abstractive cognition); ibi autem (i.e., in intuitive cognition) movet res praesens in se (*Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 12, n. 6; XXI, 442b).

These statements are so clear that no amount of wishful thinking can explain them away. The expressions "*non est per ALIQUAM speciem*", "*NON POTEEST haberi per speciem*", "*sine OMNI informatione*" definitely exclude any attempt to wish off on Scotus the interpretations of Poncius and Cavellus.

As evidence that this opinion of Scotus was held over a long period of his teaching career we have only to consider the following text from the *Collationes*:

Differentia est inter cognitionem intuitivam et abstractivam, quod cognitio abstractiva, *quae est per speciem*, non est rei ut est existens, nec ut praesens est, sed indifferenter potest esse rei absentis et praesentis, sicut et species, in qua repraesentatur obiectum ut relucet; sed cognitio intuitiva est rei existentis, ut existens est (*Coll.* 36, n. 11; V, 301b).

and the passage in the *De Primo Principio* which we discussed in our exposition of that work.

Of course the difficulty of reconciling this opinion with Scotus' general description of the process of cognition still remains. In one place he denies that

res sensibilis posset immediate absque specie intelligibili causare intellectionem (Oxon. II, d. 3, q. 8, n. 9; XII, 186b).

But this should be interpreted in the light of a qualification he makes to a similar assertion in Oxon. I, d. 3, q. 6.

There he says:

est necesse ponere in intellectu speciem intelligibilem priorem naturaliter actu intelligendi (*loc. cit.*, IX, 253a);

but later adds:

saltem in cognitione *abstractiva*, de qua modo loquimur (*ibid.*, 256).

There you have the most likely solution of the "*species*-problem" in Scotus.<sup>89</sup> Whenever he speaks of the necessity of a *species* he is referring to abstractive cognition, or the process of abstraction. The large part that the theory of abstraction played in his general theory of knowledge caused him to overlook the necessity of always carefully distinguishing between abstractive and intuitive cognition when speaking of cognition in general, and so his commentators failed to distinguish. But that is no reason why we should make the same mistake.

This solution is solidly backed up by the text from *Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 2 (quoted above) in which Scotus says that sufficient causes for intuitive cognition are (i) an object present in its actual existence, and (ii) the agent and possible intellect. The agent intellect is posited, he tells us, because something is neces-

<sup>89</sup> Mastrius de Meldula agrees with this solution: Communis . . . ac receptissima in Peripato sententia species admittit intelligibiles in omni cognitione, et intellectum agentem pro earum productionem . . . Media tamen sententia quae nobis probabilior videtur, distinguit de cognitione abstractiva et intuitiva et ait species intelligibiles necessarias utique esse ad primum cognitionis genus, non tamen ad notitiam intuitivam (*Cursus Philosophicus*, In de Anima disp. 6, p. 4; vol. III, p. 163b). He also says: Conclusio est Scoti pluribus in locis, nam in I, d. 3, q. 6 dum asserit necessitatem speciei intelligibilis, protestatur se loqui de cognitione abstractiva, non autem intuitiva, et ita praesertim se explicat disertis verbis . . . absolute affirmat cognitionem intuitivam per speciem intelligibilem OMNINO FIERI NON POSSE (*ibid.*, pp. 159-161).



sary to transfer a material object from the material order to the spiritual order of intellection:

Intellectus agens ponitur, ut per ipsum transferatur obiectum de ordine sensibilium ad ordinem intelligibilium, et per consequens de ordine corporalium ad ordinem spiritualium . . . numquam aliquod corporale potest esse ratio immediate causandi aliquod spirituale, nec per consequens tranferendi ab illo ordine in illum ordinem (*Quodl.* q. 15, n. 14; XXVI, 145a—cfr. also *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 11, n. 13; XII, 280a).

So apparently Scotus believed that, in intuitive cognition, an object (even a material object) could collaborate with the agent and possible intellects immediately, without benefit of phantasms and *species*. But he does not elaborate on this point, nor does he explain how it is done. We must therefore admit that Scotus is by no means as clear as could be desired. Perhaps he was even guilty of contradicting himself occasionally on this point. But Ockham remarked when a similar question came up in another connection:

Si dicatur quod alibi ponit oppositum—Illud parum movet me, quia . . . (non) dico praedictam opinonem, quia ipse dixit eam, sed quia reputo eam veram. Et ideo si alibi dixit oppositum, non curo; hic tamen tenuit eam . . . (*Ord.* prol. q. 1, MM 11-14).

This much at least we can state with certainty: whether or not Scotus contradicted himself regarding the necessity of a *species* for intuitive cognition, he taught explicitly and unequivocally on numerous occasions that a *species* is not only not necessary but even impossible for intuitive cognition. And this teaching is the logical consequence of the notions of intuitive and abstractive cognition as he developed them.

DUBIUM 3: Do we have intuitive intellectual cognition in this life?

Some Scotistic commentators, both ancient and modern, seem to have had some difficulty in deciding whether or not Scotus taught that *our* intellects have intuitive cognition in this life

(*pro statu isto*).<sup>90</sup> Grounds for this hesitation are undoubtedly provided by certain texts in the Scotistic corpus, but we maintain that our interpretation of these texts should dispel any doubts that may still remain. Let us collect and review the evidence as we have stated it in the preceding pages.

1. In the *Oxoniense* Scotus explicitly states on several occasions that our intellects do have intuitive cognition in this life (cfr. Concl. 11 in the *Oxoniense* List).

2. To offset these positive statements in the *Oxoniense* one might adduce passages from the *Quodlibeta* and the *QQ. in Metaphysicam* which seem to indicate that Scotus had not made up his mind on this point. Since the *Quodlibeta* is one of his latest works and the *QQ. in Metaphysicam* is usually considered as one of his earliest,<sup>91</sup> we are faced with a problem. If we suppose that Scotus really was doubtful in these two works, how are we to reconcile this with his very positive statements in the *Oxoniense*? In this regard it is noteworthy that the positive statements referred to occur only in the Fourth Book of the *Oxoniense*. Is this an indication that all or part (dd. 45-49) of the Fourth Book was written after the *Quodlibeta*, at a time when Scotus had resolved for himself the doubts that had persisted during the period between the writing of the *QQ. in Metaphysicam* and the *Quodlibeta*? Or is it an indication that the doubts supposedly existing in the *QQ. in Metaphysicam* were resolved in the *Oxoniense* and later returned to plague him in the *Quodlibeta*? Or is there a third possibility, namely, that Scotus never really doubted at all?

3. The second hypothesis is untenable. The reasons given by Scotus in the *Oxoniense* to prove that our intellects do have intuitive cognition in this life are so clear and cogent that no one,

<sup>90</sup> Cfr. Ockham *Ord.* q. 1 prol. KK, where he finds it necessary to remind his readers (less than twenty years after Scotus' death) that Scotus had definitely taught that we do have intuitive cognition in this life; cfr. also C. Shirrel, "The Case for Intuitive Knowledge", *The Modern Schoolman*, XXII (1945), 222.

<sup>91</sup> Though internal criticism raises serious doubts concerning the validity of this belief.

much less Scotus himself, could doubt their validity once they had been proposed. The first hypothesis is possible, but to hold it one would have to prove from other sources (a) that these particular passages in the *Oxonienne* were written after the *Quodlibeta*, and (b) that there are real and positive grounds for believing that Scotus was doubtful in the *Quodlibeta* and in the *QQ. in Metaphysicam*. I maintain that neither of these conditions is fulfilled. The grounds for this statement will be established in a defense of the third hypothesis, namely, that there is no real evidence that Scotus really doubted that our intellects do have intuitive cognition in this life.

4. It must be remembered that all the Scotistic texts referring to intuitive cognition in general (i.e., without mentioning the particular problem we are concerned with here) are most naturally interpreted on the assumption that Scotus was referring to *our* intuitive cognition (except in those special instances where he explicitly refers to divine or angelic intuitive cognition). Now nobody can expect that Scotus should make this explicit every time he mentions the words "intuitive cognition". Such an expectation would be a sort of *petitio principii*, since it presupposes that Scotus was actually in doubt about *our* problem, and our problem is precisely to see whether *our* problem was *his* problem. The only way to decide this, therefore, is to examine those passages which are adduced as evidence that he was in doubt.

5. These passages are:

- (a) the statement in *Quodl. q. 6* (XXV, 243b) to the effect that we do not *experience* intuitive cognition as certainly as we experience abstractive cognition;
- (b) the passages in the *Quodlibeta* in which Scotus seems loth to commit himself beyond the order of *possibility* when speaking of our intuitive cognition;
- (c) the text in the *QQ. in Metaphysicam* which says that intellectual intuitive cognition is impossible *in via* (Bk. II, q. 3; VII, 110a).

We have already indicated the proper interpretation of these texts in our *ex professo* discussion of them. To recapitulate, we pointed out:



(a) the statement in *Quodl.* q. 6 is actually a proof that Scotus believed that we do have intuitive cognition *in via*. Otherwise the comparative (*non ITA certitudinaliter*) would be meaningless. So the problem Scotus is discussing in this text is not whether we *have* intuitive cognition in this life but whether we *experience* it with the same degree of certitude as we experience abstractive cognition.

(b) Scotus' preference for statements *de possibili* in the *Quodlibeta* may have been dictated by logical considerations (based on the importance of *propositiones de possibili* in a strict demonstration) or it may have been dictated by prudence. In any case, *propositiones de inesse* were not necessary to prove the various points he wished to make in these particular instances, so what right have we to demand that he should have extended his premisses beyond the limits required by his conclusions?

(c) the text from the *QQ. in Metaphysicam* is probably an unauthentic *Additio*. Whether or not, it is only aporetic and not an expression of Scotus' own opinion.

6. We therefore conclude that there is no evidence to prove that Scotus ever doubted that our intellects have intuitive cognition in this life. The very positive statements in the *Oxonienae* to the effect that our intellects *do* have this kind of cognition even *in via* must therefore be taken as an expression of his considered and consistent opinion.

#### DUBIUM 4: Knowledge of Singulars

(a) Singulars in general and material singulars  
in particular.

This problem has begotten more confusion than any other among Thomists and Scotists alike—and all because a few simple distinctions have been overlooked. But before making these distinctions let us first see what all the fighting is about.

Scholastics were much concerned with the following problems: Does the human intellect know singular things, whether material or immaterial? If it does, can it know them directly or only indirectly? The first problem (whether singulars could be known intellectually at all) arose from the scholastic adherence to Aristotle's metaphysics of cognition. Thomists and Scotists both followed what they considered to be Aristotle's theory of

knowledge in general. According to one interpretation of this theory, the intellect can know *only* universals (*Intellectus est universalium, sensus autem particularium*) and universal knowledge is the most perfect form of knowledge. Moreover, our intellect (at least in this life) is entirely dependent on the senses for its knowledge of all things (*Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit prius in sensu*). Particular material objects, through the medium of the external senses and the internal *sensus communis*, are represented in the phantasm by means of a *species sensibilis*. The light of the active intellect illuminates this material image, rendering it immaterial, and thereby making it intelligible. This illumination of the sensible image is what is meant by "abstraction"—namely, the process which abstracts from the sensible *species* whatever intelligible element they contain and produces in the possible intellect the knowledge of what the phantasms represent, considering in them only the universal nature and setting aside the material and particular.

The innumerable difficulties involved in this theory have been mentioned in Chapter I. The point to be remembered here is that, despite these difficulties, the majority of the scholastics believed in the general outlines of this theory. Hence it is easy to see how the problem of our intellectual cognition of singulars arose *for them*. For this theory erects a barrier between our intellects and the world outside. Intellectual cognition is made to consist merely in universal concepts. How then are we to explain the obvious fact of experience that our intellects apply these universal concepts to particular material things?

Let us glance once more at a representative answer to this problem. St. Thomas can do no better than suggest that we know particular material things "*indirecte et quasi per quamdam reflexionem*"—a reflexion which is achieved by a retracing of the process of abstraction described above. This retracing of mental steps is called "*conversio ad phantasmata*".<sup>92</sup> Unsatisfactory

<sup>92</sup> Cfr. *Summa Theol.* I, q. 86, a. 1 and *Quaest. Disp. de Anima*, q. unic., a. 20; also Rudolf Allers, "The Intellectual Cognition of Particulars", *The Thomist*, III (1941), 95-163, and Franz Sladeczek, S.J., "Die intellektuelle Erfassung der sinnfälligen Einzeldinge nach der Lehre des hl. Thomas von Aquin", *Scholastik*, I (1926), 184-215.

though this solution is, it at least makes this much clear: St. Thomas taught that we can know material singulars intellectually, though only *indirectly*. And it must be admitted that it is difficult to see how Thomistic principles of cognition could be pushed any further.

How does Scotus react to all this? In the first place he rejects St. Thomas' theory of conversion to the phantasm as a means of knowing particulars:

Haec responsio nulla est . . . Nec est alia conversio ad phantasmata nisi quod intellectus intelligens universale imaginatur singulare eius (*Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 6, n. 19; IX, 272 and 292).

That is certainly what experience teaches us, but it still does not solve the problem. Or maybe there is no problem?

Let us look at it in this way then: the following points may be taken as a summary of the "principles" of the Aristotelian theory directly involved in the problem of our knowledge of material singulars:—

- 1) Intellectual cognition is achieved *only* by means of the process of abstraction as we have sketched it above;
- 2) the intellect knows only universals; the senses alone know material singulars;
- 3) universal cognition is more perfect than singular cognition;
- 4) the intellect, being an immaterial faculty, cannot contact material things directly; therefore material singulars can only be known by the intellect indirectly.

In other words, these four points constituted the main difficulties which confronted Scotus when it came to deciding whether or not our intellects can know material singulars, and if so, how. We shall therefore take these points as a basis for our examination of his various references to this problem.

*Ad 1um:* Scotus definitely denies the exclusive abstractionism of the Aristotelian theory of knowledge—i. e., he says that the process of abstraction is not the *only* way by which we have



intellectual cognition.<sup>93</sup> For he proves, as we have shown, that we also have intuitive intellectual cognition.

*Ad 2um.* Scotus denies this "principle" if it is taken in an exclusive sense. He points out that experience teaches that our intellects do know singulars and therefore it is wrong to interpret this "principle" or "axiom" to mean that the intellect can know universals *only* (and not singulars), while the senses can know singulars only (and not universals). The second part of this interpretation, he says, is correct. The senses are limited to a knowledge of singulars. But it does not follow that the intellect can know *only* universals. For the intellect, *de facto*, knows both universals and singulars. Therefore the common distinction between intellect and senses *ex parte obiecti* is not to be interpreted as a distinction between different powers on the same level (like the distinction between seeing and hearing, for example, where the objects assigned to each are color and sound respectively) but as a distinction between a superior cognitive power and another cognitive power subordinated to it. Consequently, the restriction implied by the "axiom": *Intellectus est universalium* . . . is unilateral and not bilateral—i.e., it expresses the fact that the senses are indeed restricted to a knowledge of singulars, but not that the intellect is restricted to a knowledge of universals:

Distinctio quae ponitur communiter inter cognitionem intellectivam et sensitivam ex parte obiecti, puta, quod intelligimus universale, sentimus singulare, et quaecumque distinctio alia isti correspondens, non debet intelligi tamquam inter potentias disparatas ex aequo, sicut est distinctio visus in videndo colores, ab auditu in audiendo sonos; sed

<sup>93</sup> Scotus mentions five ways in which authors try to explain how "cognitio subit imperio voluntatis". The second of these five ways is this: "Alio modo dicitur, quod sufficit cognitio vel cogitatio alicuius obiecti in universalis, vel in aliquo simili, vel contrario". He rejects this explanation, "quia tunc cum in lapide intelligatur substantia corporea, intellectus lapidis sufficeret ad volendum avem vel bovem, quia haec intelliguntur in substantia corporea, ut in universalis; similiter ad intelligendum avem determinate vel bovem determinate, et similiter de quacumque alia substantia corporea" (Oxon. II, d. 42, q. 4, n. 6; XIII, 456a).

debet intelligi distinctio intellectus a sensu, sicut potentiae superioris cognitivae ab aliqua cognitiva subordinata sibi, et per consequens, quod potentia superior potest cognoscere aliquod obiectum, vel sub aliqua ratione, quod obiectum, vel sub qua ratione, potentia inferior non potest cognoscere, non tamen e converso quod inferior possit aliquod obiectum, vel sub aliqua ratione cognoscere, quin superior possit etiam perfectiori modo obiectum illud cognoscere, et sub eadem ratione cognoscibilitatis ex parte obiecti (*Quodl.* q. 13, n. 9; XXV, 522a).

Implicit in this interpretation of the famous "axiom" is a new conception of the nature of intellect and intellection. This is one of the most important of Scotus' contributions. We shall show why later.

*Ad 3um:* Scotus denies this also, as we saw in our analysis of the *Oxoniense*, the *Collationes* and the *De Primo Principio* (cfr. *Oxoniense* List, concl. 13, and *Minor Works* List, concl. 4). Rather, he says, the most perfect form of cognition is intuitive cognition.

*Ad 4um:* Scotus denies that this is a valid consequence. See also our discussion (in Ch. I) of St. Thomas' "proof" for this conclusion.

Thus Scotus clears away the theoretical difficulties against our intellects' knowledge of singulars. No sooner has he done so, however, than his commentators raise difficulties of a textual nature. Some say that Scotus not only denies that we have *direct* knowledge of material singulars, but that he even denies that we can know material singulars *at all* in this life.

In order to understand what Scotus really said in this connection we must first have a clear idea of the meaning of the word "singular", for he often uses *singulare* where we would use *singularitas*. In Scotus' terminology, then, we must distinguish between *singulare* in the sense in which Porphyry uses it—i.e., as a thing existing here and now and in this place (e.g., an individual chair, table, man, or the like)—and in the metaphysical sense, namely, singularity or that by which a common nature

is individualized.<sup>94</sup> This assumes, of course, as Scotus and St. Thomas did, that there is some such principle of individuation. With this distinction in mind a reading of Scotistic texts which have confused commentators for so long now becomes relatively simple. Perhaps the best introduction to an application of this distinction is to be found in the *QQ. in Metaphysicam*, Bk. 7, q. 15 (VII, 434 *et seq.*), where Scotus proposes the question: *Utrum singulare sit per se intelligibile a nobis?* This question has always been a major stumbling-block to Scotistic "harmonizers". But properly understood it will be seen to present no real difficulty.

Scotus points out that the question regarding the intelligibility of singulars as such (i.e., of singularized natures *with their singularity*) can be understood with reference to (a) intellect in general and in an unqualified sense, and (b) *our* intellects in their actual state at present. In the first sense, he says, the problem pertains to Metaphysics; in the second sense, it pertains to Psychology:

Responsio, quaestio est Metaphysica, quatenus quaerit de intelligibilitate singularis respectu intellectus simpliciter; pertinet ad librum *de Anima* quatenus quaerit de intellectione singularis respectu intellectus nostri (*loc. cit.*, n. 3; VII, 436).

Furthermore, it is evident from the context that our distinction between the two meanings of "*singulare*" must be applied here. So that the problem under discussion is not whether an *individual thing* can be known by intellect or even by *our* intellects *pro statu isto*, but whether *singularity* or the haecceity of a singularized nature can be known. His answer to this problem is twofold: (a) absolutely speaking, the intellect *is* able to know the singular as such in its singularity; (b) relatively speaking, however, namely as regards our intellects in their present state, we are not able to know the singular as such in its singularity. This does not mean that we do not know *singulars*; it simply means that we do not know the ultimate degree of actuality of singulars, which is their *singularity* (or haecceity):

<sup>94</sup> Lychetus mentions this distinction in his commentary on *Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 3 (XX, 351b) but is not always consistent in his application of it.



intelligibilitas absolute sequitur entitatem . . . singulare totam entitatem quidditativam superiorum includit, et ultra hoc gradum ultimae actualitatis et unitatis, ex quaestione de individuatione, quae unitas non diminuit, sed addit ad entitatem et unitatem, et ita ad intelligibilitatem (*loc. cit.*, n. 4; p. 436a).

Ad propositum, quodcumque aliud a singulari intelligitur, includit incomplete singulare, quantum ad quidquid intelligibilitatis est in eo, quia nec includit gradum, quo singulare est singulare; singulare autem includit complete quidquid est intelligibilitatis in quocumque superiori (*ibid.*, p. 436b).

However, *our* intellects have<sup>95</sup> a kind of intellectual cognition whereby we know immediately a singular existent, even though we do not know its singularity (or that by which it is singularized); this mode of cognition is called "*visio*" or "intuitive cognition:

intellectus noster habet aliquam intellectionem, quae dicitur visio, quae potest esse naturae existentis sine visione singularitatis, sicut visus oculi videt; ergo intellectus noster est immediate receptivus actionis a re; ergo a singulari (*ibid.*, p. 438b).

This very clear statement of distinction and solution is the key to the understanding of other texts which have puzzled commentators. When Scotus says that a singular cannot be known by our intellects he means that *that by which a singular is singularized* cannot be known. This interpretation is confirmed by the following text from the *Reportata Parisiensia*:

cognitio intuitiva non est tantum singularis, inquantum est cognitio intuitiva, sed essentialiter est ipsius naturae existentis, ut existens est, quia prius competit esse naturae, quam sit ut haec, sive ut singulare, eo quod essentia sit eiusdem rationis in omnibus singularibus, non autem singularitas ipsa est eiusdem rationis in omnibus, sed diversa in quolibet singulari unius essentiae. Ex quo sequitur, quod essentia potest cognosci, non tamen singularitas eius (*op. cit.*, IV, d. 45, q. 3, n. 13; XXIV, 575-6).

This, I believe, provides the basis for a proper interpretation of such disputed passages as the following:

<sup>95</sup> Note that he says "have" (*habet*) and not merely "can have".

Pro statu isto intellectus noster nihil cognoscit nisi quod potest gignere phantasma, quia non immutatur immediate nisi a phantasmata vel a phantasiabili; entitas autem singularis non est propria ratio gignendi phantasma, sed tantum entitas naturae praecedens illam entitatem singularem. Ipsa autem entitas singularis non est nata movere immediate aliquam potentiam cognitivam nisi intellectum; et quod nostrum non moveat, est propter connexionem eius ad phantasiam; in patria vero non est talis connexio, ideo ibi hoc, ut hoc intelligatur (*Oxon.* III, d. 14, q. 3, n. 9; XIV, 529a).

This says that our intellect in its present state "knows nothing except what can be represented in the phantasm, because our intellect is not immediately changed (or affected) except by a phantasm *or by something that is capable of being represented in the phantasm*". This formulation leaves open the question whether or not a phantasm is actually necessary for every kind of intellection, and hence does not militate against our contention that phantasms or *species intelligibiles* are not necessary for intuitive cognition. In fact, as we showed in Dubium 2, we are justified in concluding that Scotus is speaking here of abstractive cognition only. But even if this passage be taken as referring to all cognition, the only requirement is that the object be *phantasiabile*—i.e., capable of being represented in a phantasm. A singular fulfills this requirement; singularity does not. Or, as Scotus puts it, "*entitas singularis*" (i.e., haecceity, the individuating principle) cannot give rise to a phantasm, but only "*entitas naturae praecedens illam entitatem singularem*" (i.e., the common nature that is singularized).<sup>96</sup>

<sup>96</sup> It is interesting to note here the different approaches of Scotus and St. Thomas to the problem of our knowledge of singulars. St. Thomas says that a material singular cannot be known intellectually *per se* and *directe*, not because singularity hinders such knowledge, but because materiality does. Scotus, denying that matter is the principle of individuation, sees no difficulty on this score. His difficulty arises from the fact that our intellects (according to him) are dependent on the phantasm in this life, and singularity is not *phantasiabile*. Therefore he concludes only that singularity (haecceitas) is not intellectually knowable in this life. But there is no difficulty about the singular. There is however a difficulty about our interior acts. Are they *phantasiabile*? Whether they are or not, Scotus admits

For a more detailed account of Scotus' assertions and arguments to the effect that we do know singulars (even material singulars) in this life, the reader is referred back to our analysis of the *Oxonien*se and the *Quodlibeta* (cfr. especially Concl. 7 of our *Oxonien*se List) and invited to read the summary of Poncius in his commentary on *Oxon*. IV, d. 45, q. 3, nn. 17-18 (XX, 350-359). An excellent summary is also provided by Fr. Herbert Klug, O.F.M. Cap., in "L'activité intellectuelle de l'âme selon le bienheureux Jean Duns Scot", *Etudes Franciscaines* XLI (1929), 5-23, 113-130, 244-269, 381-391, 517-538, and XLII (1930), 129-145. This article, however, must be read in the light of the distinction we have made between *singulare* meaning "individual", and *singulare* meaning "singularity"; and also in the light of the warning that Scotus makes many general statements about cognition which should be interpreted as applying to abstractive cognition only.

But there is still one point to be decided. Granted that we can and do know singulars intellectually in this life (even the Thomists concede that), the question remains: *how* do we know them? Directly or indirectly? *This* is where Scotus parts company with St. Thomas. For St. Thomas answers: Indirectly. Scotus answers: Directly. For he has shown that we know these singulars first of all by intuitive cognition; and what is known by intuitive cognition is known directly; *ergo* . . . This is a corollary of our conclusion that intuitive cognition cannot be had by means of a *species* but must be the result of an *immediate* contact with the object *in se* (cfr. our discussion of Dubium 2: Is a *species* necessary for intuitive cognition?).

It should be noted, however, that though we know material particulars intuitively, intellectually and directly, it does not follow that we know existing *natures* in the same way. As we have seen, Scotus believes that it is impossible for *us* to know substances or *natures* intuitively *pro statu isto*. Hence they can

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that we know them intuitively (and hence directly). This seems to strengthen our conclusion that when Scotus speaks of the necessity of the *species* and of phantasms, he is referring only to abstractive cognition.



only be known abstractively. But intuitive cognition of material things (particulars) assures us of the *existence* of the common nature or substance in the particular, probably by some sort of inference. Fr. Klug suggests the following explanation: "l'intellect connaît par intuition, si une nature existe, parce qu'il a une connaissance de l'acte sensitif qui saisit par intuition la nature existante".<sup>97</sup>

To sum up, it seems that we are justified in maintaining that Scotus teaches that we know material particulars intellectually and directly in this life—and that he teaches this explicitly, even though he is not always as clear on this point as could be desired.<sup>98</sup>

(b) Immaterial singulars: Our soul and our interior acts.

So far we have been discussing our knowledge of *material* singulars. But what about *immaterial* singulars? How do we know our own soul and our interior acts—acts of willing, choosing, knowing, etc.? The answers to these questions are of the utmost importance.

The reader may recall that we quoted a text from the *Oxon-iense* which shows that Scotus considered intuitive cognition as the basis for certitude regarding psychological data:

<sup>97</sup> This, of course, is an interpretation of Scotus' thought. I know of no place where Scotus attempted to solve this problem *ex professo*. It is an interesting explanation, however, and similar to one we shall find later *ad mentem Ockham*. It certainly increases the importance of the following section on our knowledge of our interior acts. For obviously an intuitive knowledge of interior acts is necessary before such an inference can be made. Systematically speaking, of course, this explanation is of importance only if we can prove that there are such "common natures" singularized in individuals. But even if this is denied, there still remains the problem of our knowledge of substances, and this explanation seems to be the best that can be offered.

<sup>98</sup> Fr. Shircel was therefore a little hasty when he said (a) that Scotus' denial of the *species* in intuitive cognition "is not the written doctrine of Scotus; it is rather the implied doctrine", and (b) when he said that direct knowledge of singulars "is but an implication of the doctrine of intuitive cognition . . . not the express doctrine of Duns Scotus (cfr. op. cit. n. 90 *supra*, p. 228).

Praeterea, si non haberemus de aliquo cognitionem intuitivam, non sciremus de actibus nostris si insunt nobis, vel non, certitudinaliter (de actibus dico intrinsecis) . . . (*Oxon.* d. 49, q. 8; XXI, 306b).

To appreciate fully the significance of this remark we must recall that there are two main methods of attacking problems in psychology—the metaphysical or *a priori* approach, and the experiential approach based on analysis of (a) experimental data and (b) data derived from introspective analysis of our interior acts. Though psychologists may disagree about the respective merits of these two methods, two facts are indisputable: first, the experiential approach is more scientific and more in line with modern ideas; secondly, it is thoroughly traditional and characteristic of the Franciscan school. Even a slight acquaintance with the works of St. Bonaventure, Roger Bacon, Peter John Olivi, Aureoli and Ockham will suffice to convince the most sceptical that the Franciscans were not only surprisingly modern in their psychological method, but that this modernity consists precisely in their introspective experientialism. The broad outlines of such a thesis have been sketched in Fr. Longpré's article: "The Psychology of Duns Scotus and its Modernity".<sup>99</sup>

The primary purpose of the present section is to show that introspective experientialism is not an absolutely scientific tool unless based on a definite theory of intuitive cognition. The link between internal experience and intuition was more or less taken for granted by Fr. Longpré, and his otherwise admirable article suffers accordingly. We shall endeavour to state the nature of this connection systematically. In that way we hope to lay the foundations for a more complete and more scientific study of the traditional Franciscan psychology, and to indicate the main lines along which a future reconciliation between modern and mediaeval intuitionists should proceed. For there is much food for thought in Bergsonian intuitionism and Husserl's phenomenology (to name but two of the modern systems) and much in common between them and the traditional Francis-

<sup>99</sup> *Franciscan Educational Conference XIII* (1931), 19-77.

can psychology. But a just appreciation of both old and new is only possible in the light of a precise understanding of intuitive cognition. And since Scotus was apparently the first scholastic to give a systematic and rational explanation of this phase of our psychic activity, our investigation should start with him.

We shall therefore proceed to indicate briefly:—

- 1) the connection that Scotus saw between his theory of intuitive cognition and the introspective method in psychology;
- 2) the empirical psychological data which he considered guaranteed by an application of this method.

This section will be no more than a sketch outline of these points, but it is hoped that it will provide a scheme for future historical research.

#### 1. *Connection between intuition and internal experience:*

A major problem for the middle ages was the question whether or not the soul knows its own acts directly. This was intimately bound up with the problem of our knowledge of singulars, which was the subject of the preceding section. For the starting point of introspective psychology is our direct knowledge of the acts of the soul. Obviously, unless direct cognition of immaterial singulars can be justified, this method is vitiated at the roots. Methodologically, then, Scotus' first task was to justify his assertion that we can know intellectually and directly the acts of our soul.

The emphasis again is on the words "intellectually" and directly". For direct cognition, as we have seen, implies intuition—i.e., the grasping of an object as it is in itself and not merely as represented in some more or less faithful likeness such as a *spécies sensibilis* or *intelligibilis*.

Scotus did not hesitate to admit the possibility of intellectual intuitive cognition as well as mere sensitive intuition. We have already shown this to be an historical fact, and we have explained his proofs for this assertion. But when it comes to the question of Scotus' application of this theory to psychology we are confronted with a delicate problem of textual interpretation. For we find that he does not use the exact words "intuitive cog-



dition" when he cites the data provided by introspective analysis as evidence for various points he wishes to make. He generally uses the word "*experimur*" instead. Fr. Longpré has variously rendered this word as "we perceive intuitively", "we are conscious of", "psychological intuition attests", and so forth.<sup>100</sup> We believe that he was perfectly justified in so doing, but we also think that the link between "*cognitio intuitiva*" and "*experimur*" is not so clear as to warrant the assumption that they mean the same thing. For that reason we shall attempt to bring out the connection in Scotus' own words.

A doubt regarding the necessity of this connection may arise on the following score: Scotus himself stated that singulars can be known by both intuitive and abstractive cognition.<sup>101</sup> Therefore, when he uses the word *experimur* with reference to our interior acts, what guarantee do we have that this word refers to an act of intuitive and not of abstractive cognition? Indeed, what guarantee do we have that it refers to a cognitive act at all?

In the first place, the word "*experimur*" is a technical term in mediaeval philosophy and is derived from the word "*experimentum*". Now the latter did not mean an experiment in the modern sense. It meant a fact of assertoric evidence, as opposed to demonstrative evidence. It is obvious that evidence can only refer to a cognitive act. So our second difficulty is taken care of, and there is no danger of mistaking experiential intuition for an appetitive or emotional reaction. But granted that the word "*experimur*" refers to an act of cognition, what is the nature of that act? Is it intuitive or is it abstractive? Is it sensitive or intellectual? And, finally, is it direct or indirect?

Let us admit at the outset that it *can* be either abstractive or intuitive, at least on the level of sense knowledge (if we include the interior senses). But let us not forget that, in any case, an act of intuitive cognition always precedes an act of abstractive cognition. For this distinction, as we have pointed out, refers only to acts of simple apprehension, and these result in a *conceptus vel notio simpliciter simplex* which can only be

<sup>100</sup> *Loc. cit.*, passim.

<sup>101</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* III, d. 14, q. 3 (XIV, 524a and 527a).

derived from an object originally present in its existential actuality. And this, as we have seen, is the object of intuitive cognition.<sup>102</sup>

The intellect, therefore, does not only know universals. It also knows singulars as singular. It can therefore intuitively perceive an act when it is taking place, and can recall it (by an act of imperfect intuitive cognition) after it has been completed. All this we have seen already. But we wish to emphasize this point: Scotus specifically states that this applies to our interior activity, such as acts of our intellect and of our will. He also states that these acts can be apprehended only by our intellect, and in no way by our sense faculties (this to offset too loose an acceptance of the "axiom": *Nihil est in intellectu nisi quod fuerit prius in sensu*). Finally he states that they can be known intuitively and directly.<sup>103</sup>

So much for the fact that we can and do perceive our interior acts intuitively. But what of the connection between this fact and the word "*experimur*"? It is clearly stated by Scotus in the classic page of the *Oxonien*se that we shall analyse later in this section. For the moment we shall only note that he enumerates at length various facts of consciousness which are guaranteed by assertoric evidence. Each fact enumerated is prefaced by the word "*experimur*". And lest there be any doubt about the meaning of this word, he adds by way of summary:

Intellectus potest percipere actum meum *intuitive* . . . quodam sensu, id est perceptione interiori *experimur* . . .<sup>104</sup>

In other words, the intuitive perception of my interior acts is itself the act of a sort of interior sense.<sup>105</sup> Interior perception is

<sup>102</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 2, n. 21 (IX, 47 and passim).

<sup>103</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 3, n. 17 (XX, 348 *et seq.*); this text, because of its length, and because it must be read in its entirety to yield the conclusions we have drawn, cannot be quoted here piecemeal; it will be found in *Appendix A* at the end of this section.

<sup>104</sup> *Oxon.* IV, d. 43, q. 2, n. 11 (XX, 40b).

<sup>105</sup> This is an interesting link with Hugh of St. Victor; cfr. his *De Sacramentis*, Lib. I, pars 6, cap. 4 (Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 176, c. 266).

therefore as immediate as the acts of our external senses, and is further qualified by the name "*visio*", which is another name for intuitive cognition as we have seen. Finally, we have the direct statement that all this is implied by the word "*experimur*".

Therefore Fr. Longpré is more or less justified in defining psychological intuition as "an immediate perception, the act of an interior sense, by which the soul apprehends itself without any intermediate agent, as well as its operations and its states of conscience (consciousness?)."<sup>106</sup> We object to Fr. Longpré, however, on three scores: (i) he took this interpretation of "*experimur*" very much for granted; (ii) he uses the word "intuition" as though it had only this connotation of immediate perception of our interior acts and states of consciousness, whereas Scotus himself definitely states that *omne ens* is the object of intuitive cognition (absolutely speaking, at least); (iii) he says that we can know the soul itself by intuitive cognition, and this is expressly denied by Scotus *de facto* (i.e., *saltem pro statu isto*), as we shall see presently.

Our discussion so far has served to show that whenever Scotus appeals to experience with regard to our interior acts or any other aspect of our psychic *activity*, his empiricism is firmly grounded on his doctrine of intuitive cognition. No other basis would be secure. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how any form of empirical methodology would be scientifically feasible without such a basis.

## 2. *Psychological data guaranteed by experience (i.e., by intuitive cognition):*

Scotus was careful not to abuse the weapon of introspection he had so carefully fashioned. Though we undoubtedly intuit the *acts* of our soul, intuition does not give us an immediate vision of the essence or nature of the soul itself. In this life we only possess a general abstract knowledge of that, and this abstract knowledge is formed from general concepts derived from sense experience:

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<sup>106</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 26.



Non enim cognoscitur anima a nobis, nec natura nostra pro statu isto, nisi sub ratione aliqua generali abstrahibili a sensibilibus.<sup>107</sup>

At the very least, some impulse from outside is necessary to set the soul's initial activity in motion.<sup>108</sup> From the notions evoked by this exterior impulse the soul can form an abstract idea of its proper essence. The acts of the soul, however, present themselves immediately to our intellectual perception and very little escapes our intuition in the domain of the soul if we except its own esse *sub proprio et quidditativo conceptu*.<sup>109</sup>

The immanent acts of the soul, however, considered merely as vital acts of mental "faculties" are immediately perceived by intellectual intuition, and from this point the introspective psychologist should set out. From the nature of the acts thus immediately perceived he can argue to the nature of the "faculties" which produced those acts. To invert this order would be unscientific:

Concedo quod non habetur modo cognitio de anima vel de aliqua eius potentia, ita distincta quod ex ipsa possit cognosci, quod aliquod obiectum tale sibi correspondeat; sed ex ipso actu quem experimur, concludimus potentiam et naturam, cuius iste actus est illud respicere pro obiecto, quod percipimus attingi per actum, ita quod percipimus attingi per actum, ita quod obiectum potentiae non concluditur ex cognitione potentiae, sed ex cognitione actus quem experimur.<sup>110</sup>

This is a clear statement of psychological method, typically Franciscan and diametrically opposed to the *a priori* metaphysical approach of mediaeval Aristotelianism, which follows the very method which Scotus here deplores—namely, beginning with the nature or essence of the faculties themselves considered abstractly, and arguing to the nature of the acts which flow from these

<sup>107</sup> *Oxon.* Prol. q. 1, n. 11 (VIII, 21).

<sup>108</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 8, n. 14 (XII, 195-6).

<sup>109</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 10, n. 2 (XXI, 318b); also *Rep. Par.* Prol. q. 2, n. 7 (XXII, 3a).

<sup>110</sup> *Oxon.* Prol. q. 1, n. 13 (VIII, 23).

faculties. This latter method<sup>111</sup> is simply putting the cart before the horse, and was responsible for most of the psychological dilemmas which tormented thirteenth-century philosophers. Scotus laid down the principle which freed independent thinkers from this snare of topsy-turvy methodology. Unfortunately he did not leave us a systematic treatise embodying the further application of such principles in psychology.

But though Scotus left no systematic treatise embodying the results which might be expected to flow from the application of his principles, he indicated here and there the main points that such a treatise should develop. For the sake of historical interest we shall list them briefly as follows:

i) internal experience warns us that abstraction is an immanent operation of the mind, and that the intellect is eminently *active* in this phase of cognition and not subject to mere passive determination by the object or its substitute, the *species*.<sup>112</sup>

ii) Introspection shows that acquired habits co-operate *actively* with the activity of the faculties that they perfect.<sup>113</sup>

iii) Scotus appeals to psychological intuition for verification of the celebrated Franciscan doctrine regarding what Longpré calls "the synergetic activity of the psychological powers in mental life"<sup>114</sup> which usually goes by the more classical term of "*colligantia*" of the faculties of the soul. This is but one aspect

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<sup>111</sup> A classic example of which is the argument: Our intellects cannot know material singulars directly because our intellects are immaterial!

<sup>112</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 7, n. 20 (IX, 361a) and *Quodl.* q. 15, n. 2 (XXVI, 119a). In emphasizing the activity of the intellect in the generation of universals, Scotus is following the Augustinian tradition. The intellect is not passively impressed by an object, but in the presence of the object, by reason of its own active power, the intellect begets knowledge. The *kind* of knowledge is to a certain extent determined by the object (e.g., only existents can beget intuitive cognition, whereas both existents and non-existents can beget abstractive cognition), but the knowledge itself is due to the generative power of the intellect. Hence the phantasm is only a partial cause (and a subordinate one) in abstraction.

<sup>113</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* II, d. 33, q. 1, n. 5 (XV, 443a).

<sup>114</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 66.

of the more fundamental doctrine which teaches that there is no real distinction between the soul and its faculties.<sup>115</sup>

iv) Introspection also establishes the fact of succession in our intellectual activity.<sup>116</sup>

v) Internal experience attests that ideas are not innate.<sup>117</sup>

vi) It bears witness to the existence of human liberty.<sup>118</sup>

vii) It establishes the incapacity of the mind to embrace a multitude of objects at the same time, and reveals the imperfections and limits of our knowledge.<sup>119</sup>

These are just so many indications of the possibilities of the introspective method based on intuitive cognition. They are merely hints thrown out by Scotus in the course of other discussions.

But in one place at least he applies this method with conscientious attention to detail and with deadly effect. This is in the celebrated page of the *Oxonienne* which is devoted indirectly to a crushing refutation of Averroes and his doctrine of one active intellect common to all men. Averroism admitted that each individual has his own body, sensitive soul and possible intellect, but maintained that the human species has only one active intellect common to all men and separated from the individual. Against this form of monopsychism which destroyed the idea of personal immortality and the spirituality of the soul, Scotus appeals to evident interior experiences to prove that we have a personal faculty of knowing which is irreducible to mere sensation, and immaterial vital acts which reveal the presence in us of a spiritual principle.

He notes first of all that, since we are trying to prove the immateriality of the soul, we should have a clear notion of what

<sup>115</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* II, d. 42, q. 4, n. 10 (XIII, 461) and *Rep. Par.* II, d. 42, q. 4, n. 14 (XXIII, 221a).

<sup>116</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* I, d. 3, q. 7, n. 20 (IX, 361a).

<sup>117</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* III, d. 24, q. 1, n. 12 (XV, 43).

<sup>118</sup> Cfr. *Oxon.* IV, d. 49, q. 10, n. 10 (XXI, 333b).

<sup>119</sup> Cfr. *Rep. Par.* III, d. 14, q. 3, n. 5 (XXIII, 356) and *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9, n. 11 (XII, 216a).



is implied by the word "immaterial". Though this term is frequently used by Aristotle, the meaning he attaches to it is somewhat obscure. In fact, we can understand this term in three different ways: "immaterial" can mean "incorporeal" in the sense that it does not operate by means of a bodily organ; or it can mean "unextended", which implies more than just "incorporeal"; finally, it can be understood in the sense that it abstracts from time and place and similar corporeal attributes which are rightly called "material conditions of things". The strongest proof for the immateriality of the soul will be that based on the second meaning of "immaterial". In other words, if it can be shown that any of our cognitive acts abstract from the material conditions of things we are justified in maintaining that the faculty in which these acts are rooted is itself unextended or immaterial.

But it does not seem possible to construct such a proof in any other way than by means of reflecting on our own acts, and thus arriving mediately at a concept of the subject which produces them. For if we argue thus: we perform acts of immaterial cognition; but nothing sensitive can be immaterial; therefore these acts must be referred to some other faculty which is immaterial, we still have to establish the antecedent. This means that we have to examine the objects towards which the acts of cognition, which we have called immaterial, tend. And such an examination is only possible if we are capable of an act of reflexion. As a matter of fact, we know *by experience* that such an act is possible, and this fact of reflexion in itself is a guarantee of the immateriality of the faculty which is capable of that act. For a quantitative and extended element is not capable of a reflexive act.

But apart from that, the act of reflexion or of introspection (an intuitive act) reveals that we definitely do possess a knowledge of objects under an aspect which cannot be attributed to a sensitive faculty.

We are aware by experience (intuitively) that we actually know universals. We know being and various aspects of it, such as quality; and we know these in a manner totally different from

our knowledge of sense objects, and in a manner absolutely beyond the power of even the most perfect sense-faculty.

We also know by experience that we know the relations which arise from the natures of things, even when these things do not come under the power of the senses.

We are conscious (intuitively) of distinguishing all that is contained in the category of the sensitive from that which does not belong to this genus.

We are conscious of knowing relations of reason, like the notions of Universal, Genus, Species, etc.

We are even aware (intuitively) of knowing the very act by which we know these different objects; and we know it percisely as an immanent act of our own.

We perceive that we give our assent to judgments without the possibility of contradiction or error, as for example when we accept first principles.

Finally we are aware of passing from the known to the hitherto unknown by acts of discursive reasoning, in such a way that it is impossible not to assent to the evidence of the argumentation or to the truth of the conclusion deduced.

It is impossible to attribute any one of these acts of ours to a mere sensitive faculty. Consequently we are forced to conclude that our soul is immaterial.

We are also forced to conclude that all these acts we have been considering are *our own personal acts*.

If anyone denies either of these conclusions, it is useless to argue further with him. He is a *protervus*. He is, so to speak, intellectually blind; and just as it is useless to argue with a blind man when he says that he does not see color, so it is useless to argue with a man who denies the evidence of facts revealed by introspection.<sup>120</sup>

This passage from the *Oxonienne* has been cited as an example of what Scotus did with the weapon of introspection fashioned according to the doctrine of intuitive cognition he so carefully

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<sup>120</sup> This is an analysis of *Oxon.* IV, d. 43, q. 2, nn. 9-11 (XX, 39-41). On account of its length, the text is not quoted here but will be found in *Appendix B* at the end of this section.

elaborated and defended. Though one might not agree with all of his conclusions in this regard, and though his analysis cannot compare with that of Olivi,<sup>121</sup> for example, Scotus does bring out a fundamental point that is too often overlooked, and without which the introspective data of Olivi would be of doubtful value—namely, the dependence of the introspective method on the fact of intuitive cognition.

We may be permitted to conclude with a quotation from Ockham wherein are summarized the two main points discussed in this *dubium*. Ockham foresaw that he was liable to be condemned for a certain opinion because it would be considered “an innovation”. His answer was simply to remind his prospective critics that Scotus had taught precisely the same thing:

Ne autem ista opinio, quantum ad notitiam intuitivam sensibilibum et aliquorum mere intelligibilium, tamquam nova contemnatur adduco verba Doctoris Subtilis . . . duas praedictas conclusiones *expresse* ponentis, videlicet quod intellectus noster intuitive cognoscit sensibilia et quod intuitive cognoscit aliqua mere intelligibilia.<sup>122</sup>

#### APPENDIX A

Text of *Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 3, nn. 17-18: XX, 348-9:—

Dico ergo quantum ad istum articulum, quod in intellectiva est memoria et actus recordandi proprie dictus. Supposito enim, quod intellectus non tantum cognoscat universalialia (quod quidem verum est de intellectione abstractiva, de qua loquitur Philosophus, quia sola illa est scientifica), sed *etiam intuitive cognoscat illa, quae sensus cognoscit*, quia perfectior et superior cognoscitiva in eodem, cognoscit illud quod inferior, et etiam quod cognoscit sensationes (et utrumque probatur per hoc quod cognoscit propositiones contingenter veras, et ex eis syllogizat; formare autem propositiones, et syllogizare proprium est intellectui; *illarum autem veritas est de obiectis ut intuitive cognitiss*, sub ratione scilicet existentiae, sub qua cognoscuntur a sensu),

<sup>121</sup> Cfr. for example, the table of references in Olivi's *Quaestiones in II lib. Sententiarum* (ed. B. Jansen, Quaracchi, 1926), vol. III, p. 599.

<sup>122</sup> *Quaestio 1<sup>a</sup> Princ. Prologi in I Sent.* (ed. Ph. Boehner, Paderborn, 1939) KK, p. 32.



sequitur quod in intellectu possint inveniri omnes conditiones prius dictae pertinentes ad recordari; percipere enim potest tempus, et habere actum post tempus, et sic de caeteris.

Et potest breviter recordari cuiuscumque obiecti, cuius potest memoria sensitiva recordari, quia potest illum actum, qui est proximum obiectum intuitivae, cognoscere quando est, et ita recordari postquam fuit; potest etiam recordari multorum obiectorum proximorum, quorum non potest sensitiva recordari, utpote omnis intellectionis et volitionis praeteritae. Quod enim talium recordetur homo, probatur, quia alias non posset poenitere de malis volitionibus, nec praeteritam intellectionem ut praeteritam conferre ad futuram, nec per consequens ex eo quod ista speculatus est ordinare se ad speculandum alia ex istis; et breviter omnia destruuntur, si intellectionum et volitionum praeteritarum non recordamur.

Istarum autem non potest aliquis sensus recordari, quia non cadunt sub obiecto alicuius sensus; ergo illa recordatio est propria intellectui, et hoc *ratione obiecti proximi*. Est etiam alia propria, non solum ratione obiecti proximi, sed remoti, ut recordatio, quae tendit in necessarium, ut necessarium, ut in obiectum remotum, cuiusmodi est recordatio habens pro obiecto remoto triangulum habere tres, nam obiectum proximum recordationis, scilicet actus tendens in tale obiectum, non potest esse nisi actus partis intellectivae.

Sic ergo patet quod aliqua recordatio est propria intellectui ex ratione utriusque obiecti actus scilicet tam proximi tam remoti; aliqua etiam ratione obiecti proximi est ita propria, quod non posset competere sensui, aliqua ex ratione obiecti proximi competit intellectui, tamen potest competere sensui, utpote si *intellectus intuitive intellexit me videre album*, postea intellectus recordatur me vidisse album. Hoc quidem obiectum proximum et remotum posset esse obiectum recordationis non solum sensitivae, sed etiam potest esse obiectum recordationis intellectivae, et est, quandocumque fit collatio ex tali recordatione per discursum ad aliud syllogistice sensatio praeterita non potest esse obiectum proximum, nisi tantum recordationis intellectivae, ut tactum est in articulo praecedenti.

*Nulla tamen recordatio pertinet ad intellectum, inquantum est praecise abstractive intelligens.*

## APPENDIX B

Text of *Oxon.* IV, d. 43, q. 2, nn. 9-11; XX, 39-40:—

Aliter probatur antecedens principale, quia aliqua cognitio immaterialis inest nobis; nulla autem sensitiva potest esse immaterialis; ergo, etc. Istum vocabulum *immateriale* est frequens in usu Philosophi in proposito, sed videtur ambiguum. Potest enim ad propositum tripliciter intelligi: Vel immaterialis, quia incorporea, hoc modo, quia non operatur per partem corpoream, et organum, et tunc istud est idem cum propositione iam posita de non organica. Vel alio modo immaterialis, quia nullo modo extensa, et tunc plus dicit quam non organica; etsi enim omnis organica sit extensa, quia recipitur in extenso, non tamen solum, quia si reciperetur in toto composito primo, cum illud sit extensum, adhuc esset operatio extensa.

Tertio modo potest intelligi immaterialis, eius in comparatione ad obiectum, ut scilicet respiciat obiectum sub rationibus immaterialibus, utpote inquantum abstrahit ab hic et nunc et huiusmodo, quae dicuntur conditiones materiales. Si ergo probaretur immaterialitas secundo modo, verius haberetur propositum quam ex probatione eius primo modo. Sed non videtur sic posse probari, nisi ex conditionibus obiecti, quod respicit ille actus, nisi forte ex reflexione, quia *experimur nos reflecti super actum talis cognitionis*; quantum autem non est super se reflexivum, et ideo ab obiecto huius actus fit finaliter probatio antecedentis.

Praeterea, habemus in nobis aliquam cognitionem obiecti sub aliqua ratione, sub qua non potest esse actus aliqua cognitio sensitiva; ergo, etc. Antecedens probatur, quia *experimur in nobis* quod cognoscimus actu universale; *experimur* enim quod cognoscimus ens, vel qualitatem sub ratione aliqua communiori, quam sit ratio primi obiecti sensibilis, etiam respectu supremae sensitivae. *Experimur* etiam quod cognoscimus relationes consequentes naturas rerum, *etiam non sensibilibus* et *experimur* quod distinguimus omne genus sensibilem ab aliquo quod non est illius generis. *Experimur* quod cognoscimus relationes

rationis, quae sunt secundae intentiones, scilicet relationem Universalis, Generis et Speciei, etc., et oppositionis, et aliarum intentionum Logicalium. *Experimur* quod cognoscimus actum illum quo cognoscimus ista, et illud, secundum quod inest nobis ille actus, quod est per actum reflexum super actum rectum et susceptivum eius. *Experimur*, quod assentimus complexionibus sine possibilitate contradicendi vel errandi, utpote primis principiis. *Experimur* denique quod cognoscimus ignotum ex noto per discursum, ita quod non possumus dissentire evidentiae discursus, nec cognitionis illatae; quodcumque istorum cognoscere est impossibile alicui sensitivae potentiae attribuere; ergo, etc.

Si qui autem proterve neget illos actus inesse homini, non est cum eo ulterius disputandum, sed dicendum sibi quod est brutum; sicut nec cum dicente, non video colorem ibi, non est disputandum, sed dicendum sibi, tu indiges sensu, quia caecus es. Ita quodam sensu, id est, perceptione interiori, experimur istos actus in nobis; et ideo si quis istos neget, dicendum est eum non esse hominem, quia non habet illam *visionem interiorem*, quam alii *experiuntur* se habere.

#### D. SUMMARY AND APPRECIATION

The results of our investigation so far may be summarized as follows:

1. Scotus shows clearly that an exclusively abstractionistic explanation of intellection is false and impossible. He does this by proving:

(a) that the theory of abstraction does not and cannot guarantee the certitude of our knowledge of existents and of our own voluntary activity;

(b) that the theory of abstraction, if considered as the sole explanation of intellectual activity, ignores the primitive and evident *fact* of intuitive cognition.

2. He establishes the fact of intuitive cognition, or proves that we do have intuitive cognition as well as abstractive cognition.

3. His teaching on these two points rests on solid foundations and can neither be refuted nor ignored.



4. Scotus also teaches that the distinction between intellectual intuitive and abstractive cognition applies only on the level of simple apprehension; therefore lack of discursive reasoning does not distinguish intuitive cognition from abstractive cognition, for the latter also is non-discursive.

5. Any reality *can* be known by intuitive cognition, even material particulars. But the knowledge of material particulars is not characteristic of intuitive cognition. For material particulars can also be known by abstractive cognition. Intuitive cognition is not distinguished from abstractive cognition by reason of *what* is known by each, but rather by reason of *how* each mode of cognition enables us to know the objects common to both modes. Intuitive cognition gives us knowledge of an *existent as existing*: abstractive cognition is indifferent to the existence or non-existence of the object known. Therefore, even though abstractive cognition can give us knowledge of existents, it cannot give us knowledge of them *as existing*.

6. Intuitive cognition is therefore necessary for "subjective verification" of contingent truths.

7. Abstractive and intuitive cognition are specifically distinct. Intuitive cognition is more perfect than abstractive.

8. A *species* is not necessary for intuitive cognition; in fact, intuitive cognition would be impossible if it were dependent on a *species*.

9. The human intellect has intuitive cognition even in this life.

10. Among other things, material singulars are known by intuitive cognition (and therefore *directly*) as also are immaterial singulars (such as our interior acts). We do not, however, know our own soul by intuitive cognition.

11. Besides being the only basis for certitude concerning contingent facts, intuitive cognition is also the only justification for the introspective method in psychology and for every appeal to evidence based on "experience".

These points may be taken as the most important positive contributions made by Scotus regarding intuitive cognition (though the psychological implications of his distinction between perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition should not be over-

looked). An examination of the arguments he adduces in support of these conclusions shows that they are *true* conclusions.

More detailed knowledge of the history of intuitive cognition might be a considerable help in determining the chronological sequence of Scotus' writings. There are good reasons to believe that what looks like hesitation or doubt concerning intuitive cognition in Scotus' writings might have been rather prudent reticence, dictated by (a) the fact that the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition was revolutionary and of serious consequence for "established" interpretations of Aristotle, and (b) the different attitudes towards Aristotelianism characteristic of Oxford and Paris.

That the new classification of cognitive acts was dynamite for established Aristotelianism is proved by the systematical considerations set forth in our Aporetical Discussions in chapter I, and also by the historical reaction to this new classification. Some idea of this reaction can be gleaned from a reading of Mastrius de Meldula, *Cursus Philosophicus*, Tom. III (In de Anima), disp. 6, q. xi. The distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition seems to have been universally adopted by Scotus' immediate successors, Thomists and Scotists alike. But the proponents of established Aristotelianism balked at some of the consequences of this distinction (notably the denial of a *species* in intuitive cognition) and their efforts to eliminate these consequences and still retain the distinction succeeded only in confusing both issues.

One of the first (if not *the* first) to retain both the distinction *and* the consequences was Scotus' disciple and critic, William Ockham. In fact, Ockham went even further than Scotus in following the implications of the fact of intuitive cognition to their logical conclusion.

## CHAPTER 3

### WILLIAM OCKHAM

#### A. NOTE ON METHOD

For information about the present state of Ockhamistic studies the reader is referred to the sections entitled "The Life of Ockham" and "A Bibliography on Ockham" in Fr. Philotheus Boehner's *The Tractatus de Successivis attributed to William Ockham* (Franciscan Institute Publications No. 1: St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1944). The facts relevant to our present study may be summarized as follows: It is well to remember that, for all practical purposes, Ockham's purely philosophical work was terminated early in 1328 (i.e., within twenty years of the death of Scotus) when he became involved in the struggle between Pope John XXII and the Franciscan Minister-General, Michael of Cesena, on the question of poverty. From that time until his death in 1349 his energies were devoted almost exclusively to the production of polemical political treatises. But the philosophical system he constructed prior to this time is a work that commands our respect and sympathetic consideration.

The works on which this study has been based are as follows:

- 1) *Ordinatio Ockham* or Commentary on the First Book of the Sentences.
- 2) *Reportatio Ockham* or Commentary on the Second, Third and Fourth Books of the Sentences.
- 3) *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*.

The first two works are usually quoted from the Lyons edition of John Trechsel (1495) where they are combined under the title: *Quaestiones et Decisiones in IV libros Sententiarum*. However, there are three modern editions of parts of these works, and they have always been given preference over the Lyons edition because they are either critical or "revised" editions. They were prepared by Fr. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M.



They are:

(a) *Ordinatio, quaestio prima principalis Prologi* (published as fasciculus 1 of a projected collection of texts of Ockham by Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn, 1939);

(b) *Reportatio* II, qq. 14-15 (published in *Traditio*, vol. 1 1943, pp. 245-275);

(c) *Ordinatio*, d. 2, q. 8 (published in *The New Scholasticism*, vol. XVI 1942, pp. 224-240).

The first two of these partial editions give us reliable versions of two key-texts for our study of Ockham's teaching on intuitive and abstractive cognition. The third gives us a key-text for Ockham's Conceptualism.

The *Quodlibeta* are quoted according to the edition of Pierre le Rouge (Paris, 1487), but have been read on the basis of a comparison of this edition with the edition of Strassbourg (1491) and MSS. Vatic. lat. 3075.

According to Fr. Boehner, *Reportatio* II, q. 15 is probably the earliest text of Ockham on the problem of intuitive cognition, and the *Quodlibeta* is definitely one of the latest.<sup>1</sup> This provides us with a *terminus a quo* and a *terminus ad quem* for a discussion of a possible development in Ockham's teaching on intuitive cognition, and thus eliminates one of the major difficulties we experienced in our study of Scotus. A second of these major difficulties is eliminated by the fact that Ockham, unlike Scotus, gives several *ex professo* treatments of the doctrine of intuitive cognition (in *Ord.* prol. q. 1 and *Rep.* II, q. 15). This relieves us of the necessity of trying to build up a systematic account of his doctrine on the basis of scattered references, while providing us with key-texts in the light of which scattered references can be safely interpreted.

Our study of Ockham will therefore proceed as follows: *Ord.* prol. q. 1 will be used as a basis because (a) it gives the most extensive treatment of the question, and (b) since it is an

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. "The Notitia Intuitiva of Non-existents according to Ockham", *Traditio* I (1943), pp. 228 and 229; also Glorieux, *La Littérature Quodlibétique* (Bibliothèque Thomiste, Vol. XXI, Paris: Vrin, 1935), II, 118-124.

*ordinatio* it represents the text that Ockham himself prepared for publication and therefore is safer than a reportatio. The results of our study of the *Ordinatio* will be correlated with the contents of *Rep.* II, q. 15; to this will be added (in footnotes) such references from the *Ordinatio*, the *Reportatio* and the *Quodlibeta* as are necessary to provide an over-all picture of Ockham's teaching on intuitive cognition which will take into account any changes he might have made over a period of years, though details of such changes cannot be decided until the chronology of his writings is more precisely determined.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, I should like to be very explicit on one more point: this study of Ockham's teaching on intuitive cognition does not pretend to be exhaustive. It would be rash even to attempt such a study at the present time, in view of the obvious deficiencies in the majority of the available printed texts of his works.<sup>3</sup> In addition to this initial difficulty, Ockham's doctrine on intuitive cognition is so intimately bound up with so many of his other characteristic doctrines (e.g., conceptualism, theory of supposition, etc.) that a complete evaluation of his teaching on in-

<sup>2</sup> The best we can do at present as regards dating the *Ordinatio*, the *Reportatio* and the *Quodlibeta* is as follows: The *Ordinatio* was written before 1323, "probably much earlier" (cfr. Ph. Boehner, *Tractatus de Successivis*, p. 20); the *Reportatio* was written before the *Ordinatio*, and the *Quodlibeta* was written after the *Commentaries on the Sentences* (i.e., after both *Ordinatio* and *Reportatio*); (cfr. Ph. Boehner, *loc. cit.*, p. 21). Another reason for the preference we have given to the *Ordinatio* is the fact that this "first book of the Commentary on the Sentences is the most important theological work of the Venerabilis Inceptor. Its dimensions surpass more than twice those of the three other books taken together, and it discusses the problems with a thoroughness which makes it the most reliable source for Ockham's true ideas. Therefore it must be the basis of any study of the theological and even the philosophical teachings of Ockham". (Cfr. Ph. Boehner, "The Text Tradition of Ockham's *Ordinatio*", *The New Scholasticism* XVI (1942), 204).

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. the remarks of Fr. Boehner, *ibid.*, 203-4: "The necessity of studying the works of Ockham meets with an enormous difficulty . . . the difficulty of having a text which can be used as a sufficiently reliable basis for our research work. Although we have printed texts of a great deal of Ockham's writings, nevertheless, they are neither easy to reach nor in such a condition that they present in every case the true teachings of Ockham."

tuitive cognition is impossible before we have reliable accounts of these other cognate doctrines. For this reason we shall not even try to list *all* of Ockham's references to intuitive cognition. We shall refer only to those which clarify or add something to the general outlines presented in *Ord.* prol. q. 1 and *Rep.* II, q. 15. Whether or not these other characteristic doctrines of Ockham have their roots in his initial acceptance and development of the doctrine of intuitive cognition is a question that cannot be decided now, though there are strong indications that they have.

Certain points in this connection, however, can be stated with certainty, and we should like to present them as an introduction to our more detailed study of texts.

### *B. Relations between Ockham and Scotus.*

1) Ockham's teaching on intuitive cognition depends directly on the corresponding teaching of Duns Scotus, in the sense that Ockham was influenced by Scotus in this regard, not only negatively but also positively and constructively. In other words, Ockham's doctrine on intuitive cognition was not the result of a purely averse criticism of Scotus, but was the positive development of the ideas that Scotus had put forward. Ockham certainly criticized Scotus, but this was only to refine some of Scotus' ideas, not to deny them *in toto*. As a matter of fact, the outcome of Ockham's refining criticism was a solution of those very *dubia* that have bothered Scotistic commentators of every succeeding generation.

2) That Ockham was influenced by Scotus in the manner we have suggested is proved by the fact that Ockham either quotes Scotus or refers to him on numerous occasions, not to refute him but to show that Scotus taught precisely the same doctrine as Ockham himself. There is, for example, the extensive quotation in *Ord.* prol. q. 1 which Ockham introduces to show that his own teaching on a particular aspect of intuitive cognition should not be condemned as a novelty:

Ne autem ista opinio, quantum ad notitiam intuitivam sensibilium et aliquorum mere intelligibilium, tamquam nova contemnatur, adduco verba Doctoris Subtilis . . . duas prae-



dictas conclusiones expresse ponentis, videlicet quod intellectus noster intuitive cognoscit sensibilia, et quod intuitive cognoscit aliqua mere intelligibilia.<sup>4</sup>

He then quotes extensively, and "*de verbo ad verbum*", a passage from Oxon. IV, d. 45, q. 3. But it is typical of Ockham's spirit that he concludes this quotation with the following remark:

non allego eum tamquam auctorem, nec dico praedictam opinionem, quia ipse dixit eam, sed quia reputo eam veram . . . et ideo sequaces sui non debent eam contemnere tamquam novam.<sup>5</sup>

He is an independent thinker, and he likes to insist on his independence in face of the "ipse dixit-ism" of the schools which, even in the early fourteenth century, was beginning to manifest itself strongly. Nevertheless he is dependent on Scotus, and no one knows the extent of that dependance better than he. This same passage from the *Oxonienae* is quoted once more in *Rep.* IV, q. 12 E, again with the prefatory remark:

Ne autem ista opinio nova videatur, adduco verba Subtilis Doctoris hic posita.

Again, in *Ord.* prol. q. 1 (AA-FF inclusive) it is the teaching of Scotus that Ockham singles out for a discussion whose outcome is a clarification of his own ideas; though here Scotus is not mentioned by name but is referred to only as "*quilibet doctor*". So likewise it is Scotus' teaching which is subjected to searching analysis in *Rep.* II, q. 15 (MM-ZZ).

But even more important than these easily identifiable references are those in which the thought (and sometimes even the words) of Scotus are reproduced without any acknowledgment whatever. There is, for example, the passage in *Rep.* IV, q. 12 Q which so closely parallels *Oxon.* III, d. 14, q. 3, n. 4 (XIV, 524) on the question of perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition. There are the innumerable occasions when Ockham appeals to experience for proofs of different theses. And there is, especially, the remark in *Ord.* d. 3, q. 6 F to the effect that

<sup>4</sup> *Loc. cit.*, KK (ed. Boehner, p. 32).

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, MM (p. 34).

notitia singularis aliqua potest esse intuitiva, quia aliter nulla veritas contingens posset evidenter cognosci ab intellectu.

This is the very essence of Scotus' proof for intuitive cognition from the fact that subjective verification of contingent truths would be impossible without intuitive cognition.<sup>6</sup> And, just as the realization of this simple fact played an immense role in the development of Scotus' teaching on intuitive cognition,<sup>7</sup> so also it seems that the implications inherent in this simple statement of fact were the starting point of Ockham's more systematical development of the notions of intuitive cognition handed down to him by Scotus. For Ockham's *ex professo* treatment of intuitive cognition takes this as a starting point, and that is why we find his doctrine of intuitive cognition growing out of a discussion of "*notitia evidens*".<sup>8</sup>

*A priori*, then, it seems strange that the doctrine of intuitive cognition should have brought down the charge of scepticism on a man who developed that doctrine *precisely as an instrument to combat scepticism*; whose main interest in intuitive cognition sprang from a solicitous desire to investigate the roots of *certitude*; and whose never ceasing care it was to explore the nature and sources of *evidence*. For experience itself is guaranteed by, and rooted in, that intuitive cognition which he so brilliantly defended and for which he has been condemned.

3) From all this it should be clear that, in one sense, Ockham began where Scotus began; but in another sense it is true also to say that Ockham began where Scotus left off—i.e., in the sense that Ockham was the logical continuator of Scotus, insofar as he resolved the *dubia* which arose because of Scotus' incomplete

<sup>6</sup> Cfr., for example, *Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 3, n. 17 (XX, 348-9) and *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 11, n. 11 (XII, 278b).

<sup>7</sup> Cfr. Conclusion 8 in our *Oxoniense* List and our remarks on the epistemological significance of intuitive cognition for Scotus, especially in our commentary on texts from the *Oxoniense*, in our discussion of Knowledge of Singulars, and in our Summary and Appreciation of Scotus' doctrine.

<sup>8</sup> Cfr. *Ord.*, Prol. q. 1a princ., D, E, H and N (Boehner edition, pp. 8-14).

treatment of intuitive cognition, and explicitated the conclusions which were sometimes only hinted at in Scotus. It is from this point of view that we shall now proceed to expound Ockham's teaching in *Ord.* prol. q. 1. And this exposition itself will be found to justify the point of view which gives it its particular orientation; for our exposition will be strictly factual.

### C. ANALYSIS OF TEXTS.

#### 1. *Ordinatio, quaestio 1<sup>a</sup> principalis Prologi*:

The general plan of *Ord.* prol. q. 1 insofar as we are concerned with it here is as follows:—

- (1) Ockham starts with the notion of *evident knowledge*.
- (2) His analysis of this notion (D-E) leads to his distinction between *complex* and *incomplex* knowledge, and his assertion that there are two kinds of incomplex knowledge, namely, intuitive and abstractive cognition (N).
- (3) To bring out the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition, he distinguishes between an *actus iudicativus* and an *actus apprehensivus* (O-P).
- (4) He shows that an *actus apprehensivus* must precede an *actus iudicativus*, thus showing that intuitive cognition (which is an *actus apprehensivus*) is the basis for assent to judgments (which are *actus iudicativi*)—(Q-R).
- (5) He distinguishes between two senses in which abstractive cognition can be understood (Z).
- (6) Then, preparatory to giving his own definition and description of intuitive and abstractive cognition, he discusses Scotus' account of these forms of knowledge (AA-FF).
- (7) Finally he states his own position (GG-MM).
- (8) To round out the discussion he states and solves ten *dubia* (RR-CCC).

Evident knowledge, he says, is knowledge of a true proposition based on a special kind of knowledge of the terms of the proposition. In order to have evident knowledge of a true proposition, its terms must be known in such a way that the knowledge of the terms is sufficient to cause or to be able to cause, mediately



or immediately in any intellect whatsoever, a knowledge of this true proposition whether these terms are apprehended as the terms of the proposition in question, or as the terms of another proposition, or of different propositions:

. . . notitia evidens est cognitio alicuius veri complexi ex notitia terminorum incomplexa immediate vel mediate nata causari sufficienter, ita scilicet quod, quando notitia incomplexa aliquorum terminorum, sive sint termini illius propositionis sive alterius sive diversarum propositionum, in quocumque intellectu habente talem notitiam, sufficienter causat vel est nata causare mediate vel immediate notitiam complexi, tunc illud complexum evidenter cognoscitur (*Ord. prol. q. 1 D, lines 2-11, p. 8*).<sup>9</sup>

This is just a technical way of expressing the fact that the specific character of an evident proposition is dependent on the manner in which the terms are known. In other words, the manner in which the terms of a proposition are known determines whether a proposition is evident or not.

From this it follows that evident knowledge is more extensive than scientific knowledge. For scientific knowledge (*scientia* in the strict sense) is limited to necessary propositions, whereas we can have evident knowledge of contingent propositions as well.<sup>10</sup>

Such a definition of evident knowledge may sound like the usual definition of a *principium per se notum*, and hence destructive of the distinction between necessary and contingent propositions. But there is in reality an important distinction between the two. For although a *propositio per se nota* is an evident proposition, not every evident proposition is a *propositio per se nota*. Any knowledge whatsoever of the terms of a

<sup>9</sup> Henceforth this question of the Prologue to the *Ordinatio* will be quoted simply as *Ord. Pr. 1*, followed by the marginal reference letters, line numbers, and page according to the Boehner edition, thus: *Ord. Pr. 1, 0, 4-10, p. 15*.

<sup>10</sup> Ex isto sequitur quod notitia evidens est in plus quam scientia vel intellectus vel sapientia; quia propositio contingens potest evidenter cognosci, et tamen illa notitia nec est scientia nec est intellectus nec aliquis illorum habituum, quos ponit Philosophus 6<sup>o</sup> Ethicorum (*Ord. Pr. 1, D, 9-13, p. 8*).

*propositio per se nota* is sufficient to cause evident knowledge of that proposition. But a special kind of knowledge of the terms of a contingent proposition is necessary to cause evident knowledge of that proposition. Specifically, *intuitive* cognition of the terms of a contingent proposition is necessary if we are to have evident knowledge of such a proposition; whereas even *abstractive* cognition of the terms of a *propositio per se nota* is sufficient to cause evident knowledge of such a proposition:

Si dicatur quod notitia veritatis contingentis numquam causatur sufficienter ex notitia incomplexa terminorum, quia tunc sciretur cognitio terminis, sed omne tale est principium per se notum . . . sed nulla veritas contingens est per se nota, ergo etc.

—Dicendum quod propositio per se nota est illa, quae scitur evidenter ex quacumque notitia terminorum ipsius propositionis, sive abstractiva sive intuitiva, Sed de propositione contingente non est hoc possibile, quia aliqua notitia terminorum sufficit ad causandum notitiam evidentem veritatis contingentis, scilicet intuitiva, sicut postea patebit; aliqua autem non sufficit, scilicet abstractiva (*Ord. Pr.* 1, D-14 to E-17, p. 9).

Thus we see the problem of intuitive cognition being located at the very heart of the problem of certitude.<sup>11</sup> For Ockham, in effect, is asking himself: How can I be sure of the truth of contingent propositions? If my intellect abstracts from the material conditions of things, from *hic et nunc*, how can I ever combine terms in a contingent proposition in such a way that I can be *sure* that the proposition represents the facts as they are and not merely as I think I see them? For example, if all I have is a concept of whiteness and a concept of Socrates, how can I ever combine these two concepts and know for sure that Socrates is white? A type of cognition which abstracts from existential qualifications of the subject would never suffice for an evident proposition about the existential facts of that subject. Therefore, to explain the fact of evident cognition of contingent facts,

<sup>11</sup> An orientation which is not so evident in the other and earlier *ex professo* discussion of intuitive cognition in *Rep.* II, q. 15.

we must posit another type of cognition which gives us precisely what abstractive cognition ignores—namely, the existential qualifications of things, their *hic et nunc*. And this kind of cognition is intuitive cognition:

si aliquis videat intuitive Sortem et albedinem existentem in Sorte, potest evidenter scire, quod Sortes est albus. Si autem tantum cognosceret Sortem et albedinem existentem in Sorte abstractive, sicut potest aliquis imaginari ea in absentia eorum, non sciretur evidenter, quod Sortes esset albus (ibid., E, 7-12).

This is what we might call an *a priori* argument for the fact of intuitive cognition. Ockham then proceeds to show that the conclusion of this argument can be validly proven otherwise:

ostendam, quod intellectus noster etiam pro statu isto respectu eiusdem obiecti sub eadem ratione potest habere duas notitias incomplexas specie distinctas, quarum una potest dici intuitiva et alia abstractiva (ibid., N, 8-12, p. 14).<sup>12</sup>

First of all he reminds us that there are two intellectual acts which merit consideration here: (a) the *actus apprehensivus*, and (b) the *actus iudicativus*. The first is not limited as regards its object; the second is limited to propositions. For we can apprehend anything that falls within the sphere of our intellectual activity; and this includes not only *incomplexa* (those things that are expressed as terms of a proposition) but also *complexa* (propositions themselves, demonstrations, *impossibilia*, and so forth). But the *actus iudicativus* he refers to here must not be confused with "judgement" in the logical sense. For he means precisely that act by which we assent to a proposition (if we think it is true) or reject it (if we think it is false).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Note the obvious relation to Scotus in this brief formulation: intuitive and abstractive cognition are "*notitiae incomplexae*"—i.e., on the level of simple apprehension *only*; they are *specifically distinct*; above all, we have these different kinds of cognition *pro statu isto*. In view of the later quotation from Scotus regarding this latter point (cfr. *Ord. Pr.* 1, KK, p. 32) we might even believe that this formulation is addressed to those Scotists who could not agree whether Scotus had taught these points or not.

<sup>13</sup> Note how carefully he formulates his definition of this *actus iudicativus*. He does not say it is the act by which we assent to a proposition



inter actus intellectus sunt duo actus, quorum unus est apprehensivus, et est respectu cuiuslibet, quod potest terminare actum potentiae intellectivae, sive sit complexum, sive incomplexum, quia apprehendimus non tantum incomplexa, sed et propositiones et demonstrationes et impossibilia et necessaria et universaliter omnia, quae respiciuntur a potentia intellectiva. Alius potest dici actus iudicativus, quo intellectus non tantum apprehendit obiectum, sed etiam illi assentit vel dissentit. Et iste actus est tantum respectu complexi, quia nulli assentimus per intellectum, nisi quod verum reputamus, nec dissentimus, nisi quod falsum aestimamus (*ibid.*, O, 4-14, p. 15).

With regard to a proposition, therefore, two acts are possible: I can apprehend it and go no further, or I can apprehend it and either assent to it or reject it. The question now arises: Why do I assent to some propositions and reject others? More specifically, on what basis do I judge that some propositions are true and others false?

Before answering that question—we must first of all realize that the kind of *actus iudicativus* we are concerned with presupposes an *actus apprehensivus* with regard to the same object or objects. In other words, before I can elicit an act of assent to a proposition I must first of all have apprehended that proposition:

Prima conclusio praeambula est ista, quod actus iudicativus respectu alicuius complexi praesupponit actum apprehensivum respectu eiusdem (*ibid.*, O, 1-3, p. 16).

It is noteworthy that Ockham considers it necessary to prove this point, though we would be tempted to accept it as "self-evident". And the extent of his arguments for and against this conclusion cannot but make us realize how much abused is that same notion of "self-evidence" to which we so thoughtlessly appeal at times.

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if it is true or reject it if it is false, but the act by which we assent to a proposition if we think (*aestimamus*) it is true, and reject it if we think it is false. This distinction is important. For what is under discussion here is precisely this: By what right or on what basis do I think or estimate that one proposition is true and another false? In other words, it is not a question of apprehending a true proposition. It is a question of how I can judge when a proposition is true.

For our present purpose, however, it is not necessary to rehearse Ockham's arguments on this point in detail here. To adapt a phrase which appears so often in his works: *Quaere in —Guillelmo!* It is sufficient for us to know that from his proof of the above conclusion he derives a second conclusion, namely, that every *actus iudicativus* presupposes an intellectual knowledge of the terms of the proposition which is subjected to the *actus iudicativus* by which assent is given or withheld:

omnis actus iudicativus praesupponit in eadem potentia notitiam incomplexam terminorum, quia praesupponit actum apprehensivum, et actus apprehensivus respectu alicuius complexi praesupponit notitiam incomplexam terminorum secundum Commentatorem 3<sup>o</sup> de Anima . . . (*ibid.*, T, 1-7, p. 18).

Pushing his analysis still further, Ockham concludes that no act of man's sensitive equipment is the immediate proximate cause, either partial or total, of any *actus iudicativus* of the intellect. In other words, sensation alone can never give us the basis for an act of assent to a proposition; more than that, sensation cannot even be a partial *causa immediata proxima* of such assent:

nullus actus partis sensitivae est causa immediata proxima, nec partialis nec totalis, alicuius actus iudicativi ipsius intellectus (*ibid.*, U, 1-3, p. 18).

He implicitly admits that this conclusion cannot be demonstrated in the strict sense, but gives the following "*persuasio*" in support of his contention: It is safe to suppose that what holds for one kind of *actus iudicativus* holds for all *actus iudicativi*; but to know in the sense of "scire" a conclusion is one kind of *actus iudicativus*, and the only knowledge that is necessary in this case is a knowledge of the premisses, without any reference to any other knowledge whatsoever. Therefore it seems likely that all that is necessary as a proximate cause of any *actus iudicativus* is whatever is in the intellect:

Haec conclusio potest persuaderi: Quia qua ratione ad aliquem actum iudicativum sufficiunt illa, quae sunt in intellectu tamquam causae proximae et immediatae, et ad omnem actum iudicativum. Sed respectu alicuius actus iudicativi sufficiunt ea quae sunt in intellectu, scilicet respectu conclusionis. Quia si sit in intellectu actus sciendi praemissas, statim scitur conclusio omni alio circumscripto. Ergo ad omnem actum iudicativum sufficiunt ea quae sunt in intellectu tamquam causae proximae (*ibid.*, U, 4-11, pp. 18-19).

Furthermore, since sufficient immediate proximate causes are in the intellective part, it is superfluous to look for other such causes in the sensitive part:

Praeterea: Ex quo causae, quae sunt in parte intellectiva, sufficere possunt, frustra ponuntur aliae causae (*ibid.*, 12-13).

The next step in Ockham's argument is to show that there are two kinds of simple knowledge of terms and that these two kinds of knowledge are specifically distinct. The terms of a proposition can be known in two ways. One way of knowing the terms can be the cause of *evident* knowledge of the proposition formed by these terms. The other way of knowing the terms can *never* be the cause of evident knowledge of the same proposition:

His praemissis probo primam conclusionem sic: Omnis notitia incomplexa aliquorum terminorum, quae potest esse causa notitiae evidentis respectu propositionis compositae ex illis terminis, distinguitur secundum speciem a notitia incomplexa illorum, quae, quantumcumque intendatur, non potest esse causa notitiae evidentis respectu propositionis eiusdem (*ibid.*, X, 1-6, p. 19).

This is proved from experience: for we know that the intellect can have a simple knowledge both of Socrates and of whiteness, and yet be unable to know evidently whether Socrates is white or not. But the intellect can also have a simple knowledge of Socrates and of whiteness, in such a way that it *can* know evidently that Socrates is white, *if* he is white. One and the same kind of knowledge could not be responsible for two such disparate effects. Therefore there must be two specifically dis-



tinct kinds of knowledge with respect to the same objects: one which can cause evident knowledge of a proposition about those objects, and another which can never cause such knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

As is evident from the example drawn from experience, this distinction applies with regard to purely sensible objects. It also applies with regard to non-sensible objects (i.e., *mere intelligibilia*). This is proved from experience also. For everyone experiences that he understands, or loves, or is sad, or rejoices, and none of these experiences is sensible, but all of them are merely intelligible. Yet I can apprehend "loving" or "knowing" in such a way that it is impossible for me to know evidently whether or not anybody in particular is knowing or loving; just as I can apprehend these terms in such a way that I can evidently know that it is *I* who am knowing and loving. Therefore with regard to merely intelligible objects it is possible to have two kinds of simple knowledge—one which can cause assent to an existential proposition about those objects, and one which can never cause such assent:

Omne intelligibile, quod est a solo intellectu apprehensibile et nullo modo sensibile, cuius aliqua notitia incomplexa sufficit ad notitiam evidentem alicuius veritatis contingentis de eo, et aliqua notitia incomplexa non sufficit, potest cognosci ab intellectu duabus cognitionibus specie distinctis; sed intellectiones, affectiones, delectationes, tristitiae et huiusmodi sunt intelligibiles et nullo modo sensibiles, et aliqua notitia incomplexa earum sufficit ad notitiam evidentem, utrum sint vel non sint, et utrum sint in tali subiecto vel non, et aliqua notitia earundem non sufficit; ergo etc. . . . patet, quia quilibet experitur in se, quod intelligit, diligit, delectatur, tristatur, (*ibid.*, Y, 55-66, p. 22).

It is at this point, in answer to several objections, that Ockham identifies the first kind of knowledge he is speaking about (i.e., that which causes evident assent) as *intuitive cognition* and the second kind (that which can never cause evident assent) as *ab-*

<sup>14</sup> Cfr. *Ord. Pr.* 1, X, 6-21, p. 19, where the authority of Aristotle is invoked also to show that this teaching of Ockham's is not opposed to the common principles of the schools.

*stractive cognition*.<sup>15</sup> And he concludes this part of the question with the statement:

Dico ergo quantum ad istum articulum, quod respectu incomplexi potest esse duplex notitia, quarum una potest vocari abstractiva et alia intuitiva (*ibid.*, Z, 1-3, p. 24).

Then he adds a very significant remark:

Utrum autem alii velint vocare talem notitiam incomplexam intuitivam, non curo, quia hic solum intendo principaliter probare, quod de eadem re potest intellectus habere duplicem notitiam incomplexam specie distinctam (*ibid.*, 3-6).<sup>16</sup>

This was precisely Scotus' intent, but he did not proceed so systematically.

Intuitive cognition could therefore be tentatively defined at this point as that simple knowledge of *incomplexa* which enables us to give evident assent to a proposition formed from a combination of these *incomplexa*. And abstractive cognition could be defined as a simple knowledge of *incomplexa* which can never enable us to give evident assent to such a proposition.<sup>17</sup>

Thus far Ockham has succeeded in proving that our intellects have two specifically distinct kinds of simple apprehension, even in this life; that these two kinds of cognition can be designated as intuitive and abstractive cognition; and that not only *sensibilia* but also *mere intelligibilia* can be known both by intuitive and abstractive cognition.<sup>18</sup> But to his way of thinking the

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. *ibid.*, Y, pp. 21-23 *passim*.

<sup>16</sup> Two of the best MSS. (Firenze, Bibl. Naz. A. 3.801 and Troyes 718) do not have this text, but all the other reliable MSS. do; it is probably an addition of the second redaction.

<sup>17</sup> As a matter of interest, cfr. Gabriel Biel, *Comment. in 1am Quaest. Prologi Guillelmi Ockham* (ed. Wendelini Steinbach, Tubingia, 1501).

<sup>18</sup> According to our interpretation, Scotus had formulated precisely the same conclusions at different times and from different points of view; cfr. especially Conclusions 9, 10, 11 in our Oxoniense List, and Conclusions 1, 7, 9 of our Quodlibeta List.

distinction between these two kinds of cognition is not yet clearly enough drawn. He therefore proceeds to give more precise notions of intuitive and abstractive cognition.

And first of all he points out that *abstractive* cognition can be understood in two ways:—

(a) in the sense that its object is something abstracted from many singulars—whether this object be a common nature, an essence, a form, or whatever is posited as that which is derived from the process of abstraction. In this sense, abstractive cognition is nothing more than some kind of universal knowledge;<sup>19</sup>

(b) in the sense that it abstracts from existence and non-existence and from other contingent conditions of things that can be predicated about things.<sup>20</sup>

Abstractive cognition in the first sense is not the abstractive cognition which is opposed to or distinguishable from intuitive

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<sup>19</sup> Sciendum, tamen, quod notitia abstractiva potest accipi dupliciter: Uno modo, quia est respectu alicuius abstracti a multis singularibus, et sic cognitio abstractiva non est aliud quam cognitio alicuius universalis, abstrahibilis a multis, de quo dicitur postea (*Ord. Pr. 1, Z, 6-11, p. 24*). Ockham, of course, does not believe that a common nature or essence is “abstracted” from things in this sense, so for him the “universal” is either “quoddam fictum habens esse . . . in esse obiectivo, quale habet res extra in esse subiectivo” or, more probably, and finally, is “aliqua qualitas existens subiective in mente, quae ex natura sua ita est signum rei extra, sicut vox est signum rei ad placitum instituentis” (cfr. *Ord. d. 2, q. 8*: ed. Boehner, *The New Scholasticism XVI* (1942), B & T, pp. 224 and 239). As Fr. Boehner has shown (*ibid.*, pp. 219-20), Hochstetter’s theory is most probable, namely, that Ockham finally chose the second explanation—i.e., that the universal is a “qualitas existens subiective in mente”. In this connection it is interesting to note that, immediately following the text quoted at the beginning of this note, Ockham adds (in the second redaction): *Et si universale sit vera qualitas existens subiective in anima, sicut potest teneri probabiliter, concedendum esset, quod illud universale potest intuitive videri, et quod eadem notitia est intuitiva et abstractiva isto modo accipiendi notitiam abstractivam; et sic non distinguitur ex opposito (loc. cit., 11-15).*

<sup>20</sup> Aliter accipitur cognitio abstractiva, secundum quod abstrahit ab existentia et non existentia et ab aliis conditionibus, quae contingenter accidunt rei vel praedicantur de re (*Ord. Pr. 1, Z, 16-18, p. 24*).



cognition.<sup>21</sup> Nor are intuitive and abstractive cognitions distinguished for the reason that something known by intuitive cognition cannot be known by abstractive cognition. As a matter of fact, whatever is known by one mode of cognition can be known by the other. The distinguishing factor is that intuitive cognition enables us to know whether a thing is (exists) or not, so that as soon as we apprehend it intellectually we can *judge* that it is and *evidently know* that it is: <sup>22</sup>

non quod aliquid cognoscatur per notitiam intuitivam, quod non cognoscitur per notitiam abstractivam, sed idem totaliter et sub omni eadem ratione cognoscitur per utramque notitiam. Sed distinguitur per istum modum, quia notitia intuitiva rei est talis notitia, virtute cuius potest sciri, utrum res sit vel non, ita quod, si res sit, statim intellectus iudicat eam esse, et evidenter cognoscit eam esse (*ibid.*, Z, 18-24, p. 24).<sup>23</sup>

Moreover, intuitive cognition does not *only* give us knowledge of the existence of a thing. It can also give us knowledge of the existential relations of things. And of these existential relations

<sup>21</sup> Cfr. end of text quoted in note 19 above (*Ord. Pr.* 1, Z, 11-15, p. 24). This point must be borne in mind always. It is the key to the solution of the apparent contradiction Hochstetter finds in Ockham's accounts of recordative knowledge (cfr. Erich Hochstetter, *Studien zur Metaphysik und Erkenntnislehre Wilhelms von Ockham*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1927, p. 75). Scotus likewise had insisted on this distinction, especially when excluding both intuitive and abstractive cognition (as opposed to intuitive cognition) from the conceptual order.

<sup>22</sup> Note the distinction between "to judge" and "to know evidently".

<sup>23</sup> This is simply a repetition of Scotus' insistence on the fact that intuitive and abstractive cognitions are not distinguished by reason of *what* is known by each, but by the *manner* in which each knows the same object (cfr. Conclusion 3 in Oxoniense List). But Ockham disagrees with Scotus when he (Ockham) says that "idem sub omni eadem ratione cognoscitur per utramque notitiam" (*Ord. Pr.* 1, Z, 20-1, p. 24), and he will make the reason for this disagreement clear later. For the present we may recall that Scotus taught that abstractive cognition does not attain to an object *sub propria ratione* but only in a diminished similitude or *species*; whereas intuitive cognition attains to the object *in se* (cfr. Conclusion 3 in our Quodlibeta List). Ockham eliminates this distinction by denying the necessity of a *species* even for abstractive cognition (cfr. *Rep.* II, q. 15).

contingent propositions are formed. Thus, for example, intuitive cognition tells us whether one thing inheres in another,<sup>24</sup> whether one thing is distant from another, and so forth. So that, when we have intuitive cognition of both of these objects, we can evidently know the relations existing between them. If I apprehend whiteness intuitively and Sortes intuitively, I can know evidently that Sortes is white, if he is white:

Notitia intuitiva est talis, quod quando aliquae res cognoscuntur, quarum una adhaeret alteri, vel una distat loco ab altera, vel alio modo se habet ad alteram, statim virtute illius notitiae incomplexae illarum rerum scitur, si res inhaeret vel non inhaeret, si distat vel non distat, et sic de aliis veritatibus contingentibus . . . Sicut si Sortes in rei veritate sit albus, illa notitia Sortis et albedinis, virtute cuius potest evidenter cognosci, quod Sortes est albus, dicitur notitia intuitiva (*ibid.*, Z, 29-37, p. 24).

This precision regarding *what* is known by intuitive cognition (namely, the existence of objects and the relations existing between objects) calls for a more general formulation of the definition of intuitive cognition, as follows:

Et universaliter, omnis notitia incomplexa termini vel terminorum seu rei vel rerum, virtute cuius potest evidenter cognosci aliqua veritas contingens, maxime de praesenti, est notitia intuitiva (*ibid.*, 37-40, pp. 24-25).

A corresponding precision is also called for with regard to abstractive cognition, in view of the two senses of this term discussed above. In opposition to intuitive cognition, abstractive cognition can be characterized as:

notitia . . . illa, virtute cuius de re contingente *non* potest sciri evidenter, utrum sit vel non sit . . . nec per ipsam potest evidenter sciri de re existente, quod existit, nec de non exis-

<sup>24</sup> Ockham, like all the scholastics, believes in real accidents, in the sense, for example, that whiteness is a real quality existing in things. This is what he is referring to here as is evident from the example he gives about Sortes and whiteness. Whether we admit such real accidents or not, we must admit his conclusion that a special kind of knowledge is necessary to give us evident knowledge of the relations existing between things.

tente, quod non existit, per oppositum ad notitiam intuitivam (*ibid.*, 41-46, p. 25).

And these revised definitions bring Ockham back to the problem which started this analysis. He began, it will be recalled, with the notion of evident knowledge. Experience told him that we do have such evident knowledge. What, he asked himself then, is the basis for this knowledge with regard to contingent propositions? The answer he arrived at was: Intuitive cognition alone is the basis for evident knowledge of contingent propositions, and abstractive cognition is the explanation for the fact that sometimes we are not able to give evident assent to contingent propositions. He is thus able to define intuitive and abstractive cognition in terms of evident knowledge (as we have just seen). His arguments and conclusions can be summed up in the following statement of facts:—

a) the kind of knowledge which abstracts from existence and non-existence of the known objects can never cause evident assent to an existential proposition about those objects;

b) therefore abstractive cognition is not sufficient for such evident assent;

c) but we know that we can and do give evident assent to existential propositions;

d) therefore there must be another kind of cognition which puts us in possession of those aspects of things which abstractive cognition ignores;

e) this other kind of cognition is intuitive cognition.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Per notitiam abstractivam nulla veritas contingens, maxime de praesenti, potest evidenter cognosci, sicut de facto patet, quia quando cognoscitur Sortes et albedo sua in absentia illius, virtute notitiae incomplexae non potest sciri, quod Sortes est vel non est, vel quod est albus vel non albus, vel quod distat a tali loco vel non, et sic de aliis veritatibus contingentibus. Et tamen certum est quod istae veritates possunt evidenter cognosci. Et omnis notitia complexa (terminorum) ultimate reducitur ad notitiam incomplexam terminorum, vel rerum significatarum; ergo isti termini vel res una alia notitia possunt cognosci, quam sit illa, virtute cuius non possunt cognosci tales veritates contingentes. Et ista erit intuitiva (Ord. Pr. 1, Z, 47-58, p. 25).*



As a consequence of these arguments it follows that intuitive cognition is the basis for experimental (or, in modern terminology, experiential) cognition. Scientific knowledge of sensible things begins with sensitive intuitive cognition of those things; and scientific knowledge of things which do not fall under the senses begins with an intellectual intuitive knowledge of those things.<sup>26</sup>

So far Ockham has shown that there is such a thing as intuitive cognition, but he has not told us a great deal about it. To remedy this defect he begins a more detailed investigation of the nature of intuitive cognition. And first of all he discusses certain opinions of Scotus.

Scotus had said that abstractive and intuitive cognitions differ by reason of the fact that abstractive cognition can be had of an existing or non-existing, a present or non-present object, whereas intuitive cognition is limited to an object which is actually existing and present to the knowing subject.<sup>27</sup> Ockham denies this, and one of the reasons for so doing is his famous contention that God can cause in our minds an intuitive cognition of a thing, even if the thing itself does not exist. He has been severely criticized for this. In fact, it is this very argument that has brought down on him the charge of scepticism. For this reason we shall devote a special section to certain aspects of this particular problem later. But for the present we should like to insist on several points that are often overlooked:

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<sup>26</sup> Et illa (scil. intuitiva) est notitia, a qua incipit notitia experimentalis, quia universaliter ille, qui potest accipere experimentum de aliqua veritate contingente, et mediante illa de veritate necessaria, habet aliquam notitiam incomplexam de aliquo termino vel re, quam non habet ille, qui non potest sic experiri. Et ideo, sicut secundum Philosophum 1<sup>o</sup> Metaphysicae et 2<sup>o</sup> Posteriorum scientia istorum sensibilium, quae accipitur per experientiam, de qua ipse loquitur, incipit a sensu, id est, a notitia intuitiva sensitiva istorum sensibilium, ita universaliter notitia scientifica istorum pure intelligibilium accepta per experientiam incipit a notitia intuitiva intellectiva istorum intelligibilium (*Ord. Pr. 1, Z, 58-69, p. 25-6*).

<sup>27</sup> Cfr. *Ord. Pr. 1, AA, 2-5, p. 26*; as Ockham justly remarks, "quam differentiam ponunt aliqui, ubicumque loquuntur de ista materia"; this we have seen as regards Scotus and the majority of Scotists (cfr. Chapter II, Dubium 1).

1) Either we admit that God can do what Ockham says He can (namely, cause such an intuitive cognition) or we deny it.

2) If we deny it, we must give very good reasons for thus limiting God's omnipotence.

3) If we admit it, we must take the fact of our admission<sup>28</sup> into account when discussing the nature of intuitive cognition. Otherwise our notion of intuitive cognition will be defective.

The first thing to be decided, then, is: Can God do what Ockham says He can? This will involve a study of (a) the arguments of those who say that Ockham is wrong on this point, and (b) Ockham's own arguments. Nowadays, at least, the arguments of those who say that Ockham is wrong on this point can be reduced to this one argument: If Ockham were right, then God would be a deceiving God; this is unthinkable; therefore Ockham is wrong. This, in effect, is the argument of Professors Gilson and Pegis and of Fr. Michalski.<sup>29</sup> But Fr. Philotheus Boehner has shown conclusively that this argument is based on a misunderstanding of what Ockham wrote on this point.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> I say "the fact of our admission" so as to leave open for the moment the question whether or not it is *true* that God can act as Ockham says He can. Ockham at least was convinced that God could so act. Therefore he would have been intellectually dishonest if he had refused to take the fact of his conviction into account. Whether or not his conviction is in accordance with facts is another question altogether. Later I shall show that this conviction was in accordance with facts.

<sup>29</sup> Cfr. E. Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1938) ch. 3; also Anton C. Pegis, "Concerning William of Ockham", *Traditio* II (1944), pp. 465-480; and K. Michalski, "Les courants philosophiques à Oxford et à Paris pendant le XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle" in *Bulletin International de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences et des Lettres* (Cracow, 1919-20, pp. 59-88). Michalski speaks of "l'idée destructrice . . . que nous retrouvons sans cesse chez Ockham: Dieu peut produire en notre esprit une connaissance intuitive sans que l'objet de cette connaissance soit réellement présent à nos sens" and of "l'application constante et inconsidérée de ce principe" (p. 65).

<sup>30</sup> Cfr. "In Propria Causa", *Franciscan Studies* XXVI (New Series vol. V, 1945), 41-50. Fr. Boehner's conclusions in this article have not been challenged, despite his expressed willingness to abandon his position as

Therefore we can disregard it here.<sup>31</sup> Our task, then, is limited to a discussion of the reasons which led Ockham to say that God can cause in us an intuitive cognition of a non-existent.<sup>32</sup>

In *Ord. Pr.* 1 he gives two sets of arguments to prove this point (BB, 1-37, pp. 27-28 and HH, 1-22, p. 29).<sup>33</sup> The first argument of the first set is presented as an *argumentum ad hominem*, for it turns an argument used by Scotus against the position adopted by Scotus on the question of the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition. But Ockham also considers it more than a mere *argumentum ad hominem*. For he says that he believes that the Scotistic principles he is using are true.<sup>34</sup>

Ockham argues that if Scotus' distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition were correct, then a present and existing thing would have to be considered either (a) as the *efficient* cause of intuitive cognition, or (b) as its *material* cause, or (c) its *formal* cause, or (d) its *final* cause. If the actually present and existing thing be considered the efficient cause of intuitive cognition, we must admit that the absolute power of God can supply for the efficient causality of the thing, because God *can* do immediately what He usually does by means of mediate or secondary efficient causes. To deny this would be to deny not only the Omnipotence of God but also His Providence.<sup>35</sup> Now the

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soon as anyone "should offer evidence (to the contrary) on the basis of *texts* of Ockham and not on the basis of speculation or of a scheme of the history of philosophy into which facts are pressed" (p. 53).

<sup>31</sup> We shall, however, consider certain aspects of this discussion later.

<sup>32</sup> One might think that a thorough discussion of these reasons would be recognized as basic to any discussion of the problem of intuitive cognition of non-existents in Ockham. But a search of the literature reveals that they are usually ignored entirely by the critics of Ockham.

<sup>33</sup> Fr. Boehner only analyses the second of these two sets of arguments (cfr. the "Notitia Intuitiva of Non-existents acc. to William Ockham", *Traditio* I, pp. 229-231).

<sup>34</sup> He says: Patet per principia istorum, *quae credo esse vera* in hac parte (*Ord. Pr.* 1, BB, 1-2, p. 27).

<sup>35</sup> The fact that the Christian notion of Divine Providence is irreconcilable with the whole Physical system of Aristotle may be the reason why



actually present and existing thing cannot be considered the *material* cause of intuitive cognition; for this would mean that, even if there were no intellect to apprehend it, the existing thing would still be able to *receive* intuitive cognition *subjectively*; *Per oppositum*, therefore, the *formal* causality of the actually present and existing thing is ruled out also. As for its *final* causality, Ockham points out that the only "end" necessary for the continued existence of anything is its first and ultimate end, which is God. If you admit the theory of the four causes, therefore, you have to admit that God *can* cause an intuitive cognition of a non-existent:

... sequuntur aliquae conclusiones: Prima: quod notitia abstractiva et intuitiva non differunt, quia abstractiva potest esse indifferenter existentis et non existentis, praesentis et non praesentis, intuitiva autem tantum existentis et praesentis realiter . . . Ita arguo in proposito: aut illa res existens et praesens habet se in ratione causae efficientis ad notitiam intuitivam, aut in ratione causae materialis vel formalis vel finalis. Si primum, ergo potest fieri sine ea, quia quidquid potest Deus per causam efficientem mediam, potest immediate. Non secundo modo, quia tunc re existente et destructo intellectu posset recipere subiective illam notitiam intuitivam.—Similiter: Manifestum est, quod notitia illa non est subiective in re intuita.—Nec tertio modo, manifestum est.—Nec quarto modo, quia omnis res potest esse quocumque fine excepto primo destructo, quia nulla res plus requirit existentiam finis secundi quam efficientis secundi (*ibid.*, AA, 1-5, p. 26 and BB, 9-20, p. 27).

It might be argued that a really existing and actually present object is necessary to terminate the act of intuitive cognition—i.e., that such an object is a necessary *terminus ad quem* for an act of intuitive cognition. Ockham answers by saying that the object considered as a *terminus* must either be considered as one of the four essential causes discussed above (efficient, material, formal and final) or not one of these causes. If it be considered

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some Aristotelians react so violently against Ockham's sober statement of fact on this point. It is a question of Christian dogma versus Aristotelian paganism.

one of the essential causes, the objection is taken care of by the argument we have just discussed. If it be considered not one of these essential causes we can argue as follows: every effect depends sufficiently on its essential causes, so that if only the essential causes are posited the effect can be posited. So the object, as *terminus*, need not be posited, since by assumption it is not an essential cause of intuitive cognition:

Si dicatur quod obiectum plus requiritur in ratione obiecti terminantis—Contra: Aut obiectum inquantum terminans habet rationem alicuius causae essentialis, aut non. Si sic, arguo sicut prius; si non, tunc arguo . . . : Omnis effectus sufficienter dependet ex suis causis essentialibus, ita quod illis positis, omnibus aliis circumscriptis, potest sufficienter poni effectus. Ergo si obiectum inquantum terminans non habet rationem causae essentialis respectu notitiae intuitivae, si obiectum inquantum terminans simpliciter destruat secundum omnem existentiam sui realem, potest poni ipsa notitia intuitiva (*ibid.*, BB, 21-30, p. 27).

From these arguments we have to admit that, *de facto*, intuitive cognition is possible even though the object does not exist.<sup>36</sup> In other words:

notitia intuitiva secundum se et necessario non plus est existentis quam non existentis, nec plus respicit existentiam quam non existentiam, sed respicit tam existentiam quam non existentiam rei per modum prius declaratum (*ibid.*, BB, 31-35, pp. 27-28).

The words "*secundum se et necessario*" are the key to Ockham's insistence on the possibility that God can cause intuitive cognition of non-existents. For he readily admits that "*secundum nos et contingenter*" an actually existing object is always given whenever we have intuitive cognition. But to ignore any of the *possibilities* would not give us a true notion of the nature of intuitive cognition *secundum se*. And that is precisely what Ock-

<sup>36</sup> As we have said before, Ockham gives another set of arguments in favor of this thesis in *Ord. Pr.* 1, HH, 1-22, p. 29. These arguments have been analysed by Fr. Boehner (*loc. cit.*, note 33 above), and for the present the reader is referred to that analysis.

ham is looking for. *De facto*, the *potentia Dei absoluta* can cause intuitive cognition of non-existents. *De facto*, God himself knows non-existents intuitively.<sup>37</sup> *De facto*, however, God by his *potentia ordinata* does not cause in us intuitive cognition of non-existents,<sup>38</sup> as we shall see later.

These considerations only confirm what Ockham has been insisting on all along, namely, that the only way to define intuitive cognition is in terms of evident knowledge, and in such a definition all the possibilities must be taken into account.<sup>39</sup> As we shall see presently, his consideration of the Divine Omnipotence eliminates the "deceiving God" entirely. And it is logical to suppose that Ockham introduced this element into his analysis precisely to show that, even if God did interfere in our intuitive cognition, the certitude of our assent would not be affected.

Continuing his analysis of the various elements which Scotus considered necessary for a distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition, Ockham denies that a *species* distinguishes the two. Scotus, it will be recalled, had taught that no species is necessary for intuitive cognition, but is necessary for abstractive cognition. In its broadest formulation, this opinion can be expressed as follows:

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<sup>37</sup> To deny this would be to maintain that God's knowledge must come from the things or that there is discursive reasoning in God. No theologian can admit this (cfr. Ph. Boehner, *op. cit.*, note 33 above, pp. 229-230; also his edition of *The Tractatus de Praedestinatione et de Praescientia Dei et de Futuris Contingentibus* (Franciscan Institute Publications No. 2, St. Bonaventure, N. Y., 1945) pp. 54-58).

<sup>38</sup> For a proof of this statement and a *correct* account of Ockham's teaching on this point, the reader is referred to Fr. Boehner's "In Propria Causa" (*loc. cit.* note 30 above), pp. 41-50.

<sup>39</sup> The source of our knowledge of some of these possibilities is another question. Whether Ockham derives his knowledge of the *potentia Dei absoluta* from theology or from philosophical reason, and whether his use of this knowledge makes him guilty of a theologism are problems which will be discussed later. To digress on these points now would break the natural continuity of Ockham's exposition.



(cognitio) abstractiva non attingit obiectum in se sub perfecta ratione, sed tantum in quadam similitudine diminuta, intuitiva autem attingit obiectum in se sub perfecta ratione (*ibid.*, AA, 7-10, p. 26).<sup>40</sup>

Ockham answers by saying that there is no thing, and no aspect of anything, about which the intellect cannot doubt whether or not it exists. In other words, everything can be known abstractively. Therefore everything that can be known intuitively can also be known abstractively—including that very *ratio* which Scotus says is the distinguishing element in intuitive cognition. Therefore, from the part of the object, the same totality and the same aspects can be known both by intuitive and abstractive cognition. Therefore we cannot say that intuitive cognition is distinguished from abstractive cognition because the former knows the object under one aspect and the latter does not know it under the same aspect:

. . . idem totaliter et sub eadem ratione a parte obiecti est obiectum intuitivae et abstractivae. Hoc patet: Quia nulla res est, saltem in istis inferioribus,<sup>41</sup> nec alia ratio sibi propria, sub qua potest res intuitive cognosci, quin illa cognita ab intellectu, possit intellectus dubitare, utrum sit vel non sit, et per consequens quin possit cognosci abstractive. Ergo omne idem et sub eadem ratione, quod est obiectum intuitivae notitiae, potest esse obiectum abstractivae. Et manifestum est quod quidquid reale potest cognosci abstractive, potest etiam cognosci intuitive, ergo etc. (*ibid.*, CC, 1-10, p. 28).<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Cfr. Scotus, *Quodlibeta* q. 6: XXV, 244a.

<sup>41</sup> This argument certainly applies to sensible objects (*in istis inferioribus*) which Scotus is referring to. Whether or not it should also be applied to merely intelligible objects would depend on whether or not Scotus (or anyone else) insisted that a *species* is necessary for the abstractive cognition of such objects. Ockham, of course, denies that a *species* is necessary either for intelligible or sensible objects, as we shall see later.

<sup>42</sup> This definitely denies Conclusion 3 in our *Quodlibeta* List. For the same reason, and also because the absolute power of God must be taken into account (as we have just seen), Ockham denies Conclusion 4 in our *Quodlibeta* List (cfr. *Ord. Pr.* 1, AA, 11-17, p. 26 and DD, p. 28). He also denies (for the same reason) Conclusions 6 and 2 of our *Quodlibeta* List

Here, for the moment, Ockham rests his case. He still has not told us a great deal about the nature of intuitive cognition. But at least he has cleared away what he considers some misapprehensions regarding the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition. He has shown that intuitive cognition is necessary for subjective verification of contingent truths (for that is another way of saying that intuitive cognition is necessary for evident assent to a contingent proposition). In this he was only following the lead given by Scotus. But he followed that lead more scientifically and more systematically.<sup>43</sup> On this basis he has shown also that we must admit that *our* intellects, even in this life, have intuitive cognition of sensible and non-sensible objects;<sup>44</sup> that, to know that our interior acts are really *our* acts, it is not sufficient merely to have an intuitive cognition of our Ego, but also necessary to know the interior acts themselves intuitively;<sup>45</sup> and finally, that we know contingent truths

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(cfr. *Ord.* Pr. 1, AA, 18-23, p. 26; EE, p. 28 and AA, 24-28 and DD, p. 28). But there is a restriction to his denial of these conclusions. He readily admits that these distinctions of Scotus are valid in the natural order, but maintains that they are not valid in the supernatural order.

<sup>43</sup> Cfr. Conclusion 10 of our Oxoniense List, and the *Note on Method* at the beginning of the present chapter.

<sup>44</sup> As regards our intuitive cognition of *mere intelligibilia*, it is worth noting that Ockham implicitly restricts the application of the famous dictum: *Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*, when he says "quod intellectus aliqua intelligit quae prius erant sensata, et aliqua non" (cfr. *Ord.* Pr. 1, KK, p. 32, and the following note).

<sup>45</sup> Patet etiam, quod intellectus noster pro statu isto non tantum cognoscit ista sensibilia sed in particulari et intuitive cognoscit aliqua intelligibilia quae nullo modo cadunt sub sensu . . . cuiusmodi sunt intellectiones, actus voluntatis, delectatio consequens et tristitia et huiusmodi, quae potest homo experiri inesse sibi; quae tamen non sunt sensibilia, nec sub aliquo sensu cadunt. Quod enim talia cognoscantur in particulari et intuitive, patet, quia haec est evidenter mihi nota: ego intelligo. Ergo vel haec est prima et immediate accepta ex notitia incomplexa terminorum vel rerum, vel scitur per aliquam priorem notiore. Si primo modo, ergo cum sit contingens, oportet quod aliquis terminus vel res importata per terminum intuitive videatur. Quia si praecise intelligeretur abstractive, cum talis cognitio secundum omnes abstrahat ab hic et nunc, per talem non possit

about such acts more certainly and more evidently than any other contingent truths.<sup>46</sup>

At this point he returns briefly to his position on the effects of the absolute power of God on intuitive cognition. He foresaw that he might be misinterpreted in this matter—actually Professors Gilson and Pegis and Father Michalski have recently misinterpreted him<sup>47</sup>—and he warned his readers against possible misinterpretation. He insists that the influence of God, in the case posited, is a *supernatural* influence *only*; and that, in the natural order of events, intuitive cognition is not possible without the real existence of the object known intuitively; finally, that the thing in its real existence is the true efficient cause (either mediately or immediately) of intuitive cognition of that thing:

. . . naturaliter notitia intuitiva non possit esse sine existentia rei, quae est vere causa efficiens notitiae intuitivae mediata vel immediata (*ibid.*, GG, p. 28).

Again let us insist that his only reason for raising the issue is his desire to give a description of the nature of intuitive cognition "*secundum se et necessario*"—a description which will take all the possibilities into account and will thus avoid defective defi-

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sciri veritas contingens, quae concernit certam differentiam temporis. Ergo ad hoc quod evidenter cognoscatur, requiritur aliqua notitia intuitiva. Sed manifestum est, quod non sufficit notitia intuitiva mei; ergo requiritur notitia intuitiva intellectionis (*Ord. Pr. 1, HH, 23-41, pp. 29-30*). This text can be taken as an epitome of the spirit and method with which Ockham tackles any problem of certitude. It is essentially the spirit and method of St. Augustine (as is evident from the quotations from St. Augustine with which Ockham illustrates his reasoning) and it is the only spirit and method that can possibly solve the critical aporia on philosophical grounds.

<sup>46</sup> Sed veritates contingentes de istis mere intelligibilibus inter omnes veritates contingentes certius et evidentius cognoscuntur a nobis, sicut patet per experientiam et per Beatum Augustinum 15 de Trinitate capitulo 1<sup>o</sup>, ubi declarat diffuse, quod quamvis posset dubitare de istis sensibilibus, non tamen de talibus: scio me vivere; scio, quod volo esse beatus; scio, quod nolo errare (*Ord. Pr. 1, KK, 1-11, p. 32*).

<sup>47</sup> Cfr. notes 29 and 30 above.



nitions and descriptions based only on the notion of intuitive cognition as we experience it and ignoring the manner in which this mode of cognition is proper also to God.<sup>48</sup>

As far as details are concerned, the most interesting part of *Ord. Prol. q. 1* follows these preliminary discussions. For in the Sixth Article Ockham gives the solution to ten *dubia*, and what he says here serves to integrate his doctrine on intuitive cognition.

In the first place, he insists again on the distinction between an *actus apprehensivus* and an *actus iudicativus* with respect to a proposition (*complexum*), against those who maintain that an *actus apprehensivus* is impossible with regard to a proposition. Even though, in practice, it may be impossible to apprehend a proposition without passing some judgment on it (either assenting to it, doubting about it or refusing to accept it) the fact still remains that *before* we can pass judgment on a proposition we have to apprehend it.<sup>49</sup> As we said before, this distinction offers no difficulties—at least not to modern ears. The interesting point about Ockham's insistence on this distinction is that it constitutes a reaffirmation of his resolution not to base his doctrine of intuitive cognition on the metaphysical presuppositions of dubious value.

He maintains that there is probably a real distinction between (a) the apprehension of the terms of a proposition or the realities signified by these terms, (b) the apprehension of the proposition expressing the relations between these terms or realities, and (c) the judgment—of assent, dissent or doubt, which follows this double apprehension. In any case, these three acts are specifically distinct. In the natural order, apprehension of the terms is not necessarily followed by an apprehension of the proposition. *A fortiori*, it is not necessarily followed by an act of assent, dissent or doubt. Likewise, ap-

<sup>48</sup> This is implicit in the recapitulation which begins: "Ideo dico quod notitia intuitiva et abstractiva *seipsis* differunt, et non penes obiecta, nec penes causas suas quaecumque . . . (*Ord. Pr. 1, GG, p. 28*).

<sup>49</sup> Cfr. *Ord. Pr. 1, RR, 1-8, p. 37* and *SS, pp. 41-2*.

prehension of a proposition is not necessarily followed by an act of assent, dissent or doubt (for it is possible for us to apprehend a proposition without understanding its meaning; in which case we remain neutral with regard to its truth-value). But the act of apprehending a proposition is inseparable from the act of apprehending the terms (in the sense that the proposition cannot be apprehended unless the terms are apprehended), and the act of judging the truth-value of a proposition is inseparable from the other two acts.<sup>50</sup>

In his answer to the third *dubium* he again insists that, in the natural order, the efficient cause of intuitive cognition is the thing known; and he adds, without further clarification, that the efficient cause of abstractive cognition is (a) either the preceding intuitive cognition, or (b) some *habitus* which disposes the intellect to abstractive cognition. This point he promises to clarify later.<sup>51</sup>

He then faces the objection that has always been crucial to any discussion of the doctrine of intuitive cognition, namely: How can you say that our intellects have intuitive cognition, since intuitive cognition is of singulars only, and our intellects know only the universal? And does not our intellect abstract from *hic et nunc*, whereas intuitive cognition is supposed to grasp precisely this *hic et nunc*? Like Scotus, he answers these objections by pointing out that these Aristotelian "principles" are interpreted too rigidly. Granted that our intellect does know the universal (*Intellectus est universalium*), it does not follow that it knows *only* the universal. And granted that it abstracts from *hic et nunc*, it does not follow that it *always* abstracts from the *hic et nunc*. As a matter of fact, our intellect does know singulars, and it knows them under their existential aspects. If it did not, we could not make

<sup>50</sup> Cfr. *ibid.*, RR, 9-12, p. 37 and TT, pp. 42-3.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, TT, 63-7, pp. 43-4: Tamen naturaliter loquendo habent distinctas causas effectivas, quia causa effectiva notitiae intuitivae est ipsa res nota, causa autem effectiva notitiae abstractivae est ipsamet notitia intuitiva vel aliquis habitus inclinans ad notitiam abstractivam, sicut alias dicitur. Cfr. our discussion of *Rep.* II, q. 15, *infra*.

judgments about contingent facts. But we do make such judgments; *ergo* . . . And the fact that the intellect abstracts from matter and from the material conditions of things must be explained as follows:

1) In the order of generation, the first thing known by the external senses is also known, whole and entire and under the same aspect, by the intellect; and what is known by the intellect in this case is no more "abstract" than what is known by the senses.

2) Later, however, the intellect can "abstract" many things, including common concepts. It can understand one aspect of a thing, while ignoring other aspects. And this function is proper to the intellect and in no way pertains to the senses.<sup>52</sup>

If there is any doubt about Ockham's conceptualism being based on his doctrine of intuitive cognition, the above text should certainly not be overlooked. It states the connection between the two theories in no uncertain terms.

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<sup>52</sup> This is a preview of Ockham's Conceptualism. The "abstraction" he refers to in (2) is what we understand nowadays as *universalizing* abstraction and *isolating* abstraction (which are forms of *attention*), and must not be confused with the somewhat obscure "abstraction" of Aristotelian metaphysical psychology; cfr. H. Gruender, S.J., *Problems of Psychology* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1937), pp. 36-63. The text from Ockham on which these remarks are based is as follows: ". . . intellectus non abstrahit ab hic et nunc in omni intellectione, quamvis in aliqua sic abstrahat; quia sicut intellectus habet unam notitiam, per quam non potest iudicare de hic et nunc, hoc est, an res sit hic, vel an sit nunc vel non, plus quam phantasia, et illa est notitia abstractiva, ita habet aliquam notitiam, per quam concernit hic et nunc, quia per eam, nisi sit aliquod impedimentum, ita potest iudicare, quod est hic et quod est nunc, sicut potest secundum alios sensus. Si dicatur quod intellectus abstrahit a materia et conditionibus materialibus—Dico, quod ista abstractio non est intelligenda ex parte obiecti, *et hoc in omni intellectione*, quia dico, sicut alias probabitur, quod idem totaliter sub eadem ratione a parte obiecti est primum obiectum sensus exterioris *et intellectus primitate generationis*, et hoc pro statu isto, et ita obiectum intellectus in illa intellectione prima non est magis abstractum quam obiectum sensus. Potest tamen postea intellectus abstrahere multa et conceptus communes, et intelligendo unum coniunctorum in re non intelligendo reliquum, et hoc non potest competere sensui" (*Ord. Pr. 1, TT, 129-147, pp. 45-6*).



Two *dubia* are now devoted to the problem: What can be known by intuitive cognition? As regards merely intelligible objects Ockham makes a restriction—at least for this life. He says that experience teaches us that only *acts* are known intuitively and not habits.<sup>53</sup> In answer to those who quote Aristotle in support of the view that, if anything is known intuitively, it must be *sensibilia* only, he has some very keen observations about two famous Aristotelian “axioms”:—

1. *Intelligere non est sine phantasmate:*

This does not mean that every individual act of intellection must be preceded by a corresponding phantasm; it only means that intellectual knowledge cannot *start* without sense knowledge.

2. *Nihil est in intellectu, quod non praeftit sub sensu:*

All that this means is that nothing *sensible* is known intellectually unless it is first known by the senses. This does not imply that everything that is known intellectually must first be known by the senses; for some things are known intellectually which, of their very nature, cannot be known by the senses (e.g., acts of knowing, loving, etc.). In general we can say that an intuitive cognition of intelligible acts presupposes a knowledge of the objects of those acts (for example, if I know, I must know something; if I love, I must love something; before I can know that I know or that I love, I must know the objects to which these acts refer; and these objects *usually* come under the senses).<sup>54</sup>

The questions raised in the other *dubia* are of no particular interest at the moment. Therefore we can conclude this analysis of *Ord. Prol. q. 1* with Ockham's own words:

Et hoc sufficit ad notitiam intuitivam, quod quantum ex se est, sit sufficiens ad faciendum rectum iudicium de existentia rei vel non existentia (*loc. cit.*, YY, 25-27, p. 49).

<sup>53</sup> Cfr. *Ord. Pr. 1*, RR, 63-66, p. 39 and XX, p. 48.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, RR, 54-57, p. 39 and UU, 33-71, pp. 47-8.

This text brings us back to our starting point once more and reaffirms Ockham's notion of intuitive cognition as the basis for evident knowledge of contingent truths. In the development of that notion we have seen that, in broad outline, he follows Scotus very faithfully. But he develops the implications of intuitive cognition more systematically and more resolutely than Scotus did. His criticism of Scotus' distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition was motivated entirely by a desire to describe intuitive cognition "*secundum se et necessario*" so as to include (a) the manner in which God knows intuitively, and (b) the possibility (which cannot be denied) that God can, by his *potentia absoluta*, cause and conserve in our intellect an intuitive cognition of a non-existent. However, he insists that this interference on the part of the Divine Omnipotence is entirely outside the *natural* order of things, and he therefore willingly concedes that Scotus' distinctions (with one exception) can be admitted with regard to our intuitive cognition in the natural order.<sup>55</sup> The one exception he makes is Scotus' teaching that a *species* is necessary for abstractive cognition.<sup>56</sup>

This recapitulation of *Ord. Prol. q. 1* shows that a separate discussion of two controversial points is called for. These points are: (1) intuitive cognition of non-existents, and (2) the necessity of a species for abstractive cognition. Our second key-text deals with both of these problems *ex professo*.

## 2. Analysis of *Reportatio II*, q. 15:

Reverting to a favorite Scotistic theme, Ockham begins his discussion of abstractive and intuitive cognition in *Rep. II*,

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<sup>55</sup> Ideo dico, quod notitia intuitiva et abstractiva seipsis differunt et non penes objecta, nec penes causas suas quascunque, quamvis *naturaliter* notitia intuitiva non possit esse sine existentia rei . . . Et sic si intellexit (Scotus) ponens praedictas differentias, veritatem videtur habere quantum ad istam materiam, quamvis in aliquibus, quae spectant ad alias difficultates, non contineant veritatem, de quibus dicetur locis suis (*Ord. Pr. 1*, GG, pp. 28-9).

<sup>56</sup> As we have seen, Scotus agrees with Ockham in denying the necessity of a *species* for *intuitive* cognition.

q. 15, by insisting that both are species of simple apprehension only. So intuitive cognition is not a judgment about a thing's existence. It is the kind of simple apprehension of a thing which enables us to assent to a judgment about that thing's existence:<sup>57</sup>

Sciendum tamen, quod licet stante cognitione intuitiva tam sensus quam intellectus respectu aliquorum incomplexorum possit intellectus complexum ex illis incomplexis intuitive cognitis formare modo praedicto et tali complexo assentire, tamen nec formatio complexi nec actus assentiendi complexo est cognitio intuitiva, quia utraque cognitio est cognitio complexa, et cognitio intuitiva est incomplexa (*loc. cit.*, E, p. 248).

Ockham's doctrine on intuitive cognition (like Scotus') is unintelligible unless we bear this fact constantly in mind.

But what now of Ockham's definition of intuitive cognition as "*illa mediante qua cognoscitur res esse, quando est, et NON ESSE QUANDO NON EST*"?<sup>58</sup> This leads us immediately into the problem of intuitive cognition of non-existents.

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<sup>57</sup> The dependence on Scotus is evident here if we recall the remark in *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9 (XII, 212b): "voco cognitionem intuitivam, non prout distinguitur contra discursivam, quia sic aliqua abstractiva esset intuitiva. . . ." For Ockham argues in the same vein: ". . . si ista duo, abstractivum et intuitivum, dividant omnem cognitionem tam complexam quam incomplexam, tunc istae cognitiones dicerentur cognitiones abstractivae . . ." (*Rep.* II, q. 15, E, ed. Boehner p. 248; henceforth all page references will be to this edition).

<sup>58</sup> *Rep.* II, q. 15, E, p. 248; cfr. also similar definitions in the *Ordinatio*—e.g., "aliqua notitia incomplexa earum (scil. intelligibilium) sufficit ad notitiam evidentem, *utrum sint vel non sint*, et utrum sint in tali subiecto vel non, et aliqua notitia earum non sufficit" (*Ord.* Pr. 1, Y, 62-4, p. 22); "notitia intuitiva rei est talis notitia, virtute cuius potest sciri, *utrum res sit vel non*, ita quod, si sit res, statim intellectus iudicat eam esse, et evidenter cognoscit eam esse . . . Et eodem modo, si esset perfecta talis notitia, per potentiam divinam conservata de re non existente, virtute illius notitiae incomplexae cognosceret illam rem NON esse (*ibid.*, Z, 22-8, p. 24); "notitia intuitiva, tam sensitiva quam intellectiva, potest esse de re non existente" (*ibid.*, HH, p. 29).



(i) *Intuitive cognition of Non-existents*

We have no intention of rehearsing here the Boehner-Pegis discussion on this point. As we said before, a study of the articles in the case and a study of Ockham's own pronouncements leave but little doubt that Professor Pegis has misinterpreted Ockham in this matter.<sup>59</sup> We shall therefore limit ourselves to a presentation, in summary fashion, and in logical sequence, of the main facts which will enable the student (a) to follow the Boehner-Pegis discussion more easily, and (b) to appreciate the wider philosophical significance of the points at issue therein.

1) Intuitive cognition is not a judgment and it is not an act of assent to a judgment. It is an act of apprehension *whereby* I can assent to, or dissent from, an existential proposition about things.<sup>60</sup>

2) Therefore we must distinguish carefully between (a) intuitive cognition of a *non-existent*, and (b) assent to a judgment of *non-existence*.<sup>61</sup>

3) Ockham says that, absolutely speaking, intuitive cognition of a *non-existent* is possible in the *supernatural* order because God, by His *potentia absoluta*, can cause and conserve in us such a cognition.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Cfr. references in notes 29 and 30 above.

<sup>60</sup> Cfr. texts quoted in notes 57 and 58 above, and *passim* in our analysis of *Ord. Pr. 1*.

<sup>61</sup> Hochstetter's failure to make this distinction led him to conclude that, for Ockham, all knowledge of *non-existence* is only supernaturally possible: "Die gesamte Erkenntnis von Nichtexistenz ist überhaupt nur supranatural möglich" (*op. cit.* note 21 above, p. 33). Actually what Ockham says is that intuitive cognition (not *all* cognition) of a *non-existent* (not non-existence) is only possible in the supernatural order; after all, apart from the problem of intuitive cognition of non-existents, Ockham also holds that non-existents and non-existence can be known abstractively!

<sup>62</sup> Cfr. P. Boehner, "The Notitia Intuitiva of Non-existents..." (*loc. cit.*, note 33 above), p. 231. The texts on which all of the statements in our summary are based will be found in this article, so we shall not quote the texts themselves *in extenso* but rather refer the reader to this article. Again let us insist that Ockham's reason for insisting on the fact of God's

4) He also says that intuitive cognition of a *non-existent* is not possible in the *natural* order, because there the object itself is a real efficient partial cause of intuitive cognition.<sup>63</sup>

5) As for assent to a judgment of *non-existence*, Ockham says that it is possible in both the natural and supernatural orders described in (3) and (4) above:

(a) if the intuitive cognition of a *non-existent* is caused supernaturally, the intellect will assent to a judgment of *non-existence* about the object of that supernaturally caused (or conserved) intuitive cognition, but it will not assent to a judgment of *existence* about that object. The reason for this is that the object itself, present in its own proper existence, is a necessary partial cause of assent to a judgment of *existence*; if the object is not thus present, one of the partial causes of evident assent is missing, and by virtue of this absence the intellect assents to a judgment of *non-existence*.<sup>64</sup>

(b) Since, in the natural order, an intuitive cognition of *non-existents* is not possible, the problem on this level resolves itself into the question: How is an intuitive cognition of *existents* the basis for assent to a judgment about *non-existence*. For an answer to that problem cfr. no. 11 and following *infra*.

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Omnipotence in this regard is in order to give a description of intuitive cognition "secundum se et absolute"—i.e., one that will take all the facts and possibilities into account; also to show that, absolutely speaking, intuitive and abstractive cognition "non differunt penes obiecta, nec penes causas suas quascumque", but "differunt seipsis" (cfs. *Ord. Pr.* 1, GG, p. 28).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 229-231; cfr. also: Ad septimum dubium dico, quod per notitiam intuitivam rei potest evidententer cognosci res non esse, quando non est, vel si non sit. Et quando quaeritur, a quo causabitur illud iudicium, potest dici, quod potest causari a notitia intuitiva rei. Et quando dicitur, quod illa habet causare effectum oppositum, si res sit, potest dici, quod non est inconveniens, quod aliqua causa cum alia causa partiali causet aliquem effectum, et tamen quod illa sola sine alia causa partiali causet oppositum effectum. Et ideo notitia intuitiva rei et ipsa res causant iudicium, quod res est. Quando autem ipsa res non est, tunc ipsa notitia intuitiva sine illa re causabit oppositum iudicium. Et ideo concedo, quod non est eadem causa illorum iudiciorum, quia unius causa est notitia sine re, alterius causa est notitia cum re tamquam causa partiali (*Ord. Pr.* 1, ZZ, p. 50).

6) Now Ockham has been criticized for admitting that a *supernaturally* caused intuitive cognition of non-existents is possible.

7) The argument against his position on this point is that this would make God a "deceiving God" and would therefore open up the road to scepticism. But this argument is based on a misunderstanding in (5a) above.<sup>65</sup>

8) Moreover, those who maintain that Ockham's theory of a supernaturally caused intuitive cognition of a non-existent is in principle sceptical are sometimes led by their zeal into ignoring the fact that God can do what Ockham claims for Him. To deny this fact involves (a) an arbitrary and unwarranted limitation of the Divine Omnipotence, and (b) a denial of the fact that God Himself knows non-existents intuitively.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Cfr. P. Boehner, *op. cit.*, p. 231-235. As this author points out, several objections brought forward against Ockham "do not blame Ockham for admitting that God could deceive us by this supernaturally caused or conserved intuitive knowledge, but blame him precisely because in his teaching there is no room for a deceiving God" (p. 232; the objections referred to are discussed in *Quodl.* V, q. 5). This, surely, is a historical paradox if ever there was one.

<sup>66</sup> Professor Gilson makes some surprising remarks in this connection. His references to "Ockham's all-powerful God" and "the Ockhamist thesis that God can always do without intermediate causes what he usually does with such causes" (cfr. *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, p. 74 and p. 82) are not intended to imply, surely, that Ockham's God or Ockham's thesis about God's Omnipotence is not the Catholic God and not the Church's notion of the Divine Omnipotence; or that God *cannot* do as He pleases in the matter of intermediate causes. Why then does the eminent Professor continually classify these notions as specifically Ockhamistic? Does Ockham ever give cause for the slighting reference to "the arbitrary will of the English Franciscan's God" (*ibid.*, p. 85)? Or is not Prof. Gilson himself perhaps somewhat arbitrary in deciding what God can do and what He shall not do? Finally, when Gilson talks of Ockham's concept of "a God whose absolute power knew no limits, not even those of a stable nature endowed with a necessity and an intelligibility of its own" (*ibid.*, p. 86), is he not forgetting that such "natures" receive their stability from God, and that their *necessity* is therefore *valde contingens*? Is this belief in necessary natures over which God Himself has no control the doctrine of St. Thomas himself, who according to Dr. Pegis fought and won the fight against Greek necessitarianism (cfr. "Concerning William of Ockham", p. 468)? Or is it not perhaps a confusion be-



9) Hence we must grant that God can do what Ockham claims for His Omnipotence. If we maintain that God's Omnipotence can be proved (not to mention "demonstrated" in the strict sense), we are bound philosophically to take this fact into consideration, at least to the extent of admitting that, *philosophically speaking*, Ockham is right (whether Ockham himself is guilty of a theologism or not).<sup>67</sup>

10) As for Ockham, whether he believes that God's Omnipotence can be philosophically established or not,<sup>68</sup> he explicitly states that his use of the fact of God's omnipotence in the question of intuitive cognition is purely on theological grounds.<sup>69</sup> Hence he cannot be accused of a theologism.

11) This should suffice for the problem of (supernatural) intuitive cognition of *non-existents*. But another problem arises when we speak of assent to a judgment of *non-existence*. As we saw in (5b) above, this new problem is limited to the question: How is an intuitive cognition of *existents* the basis for assent to a judgment of *non-existence*?

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tween the Christian concept of God and the Aristotelian First Cause which cannot interfere in the world of necessary essences without of necessity destroying that world—a world which is, therefore, *essentially* un-providential?

<sup>67</sup> Hence the difficulty in reconciling Professor Pegis' statement that St. Thomas (whom he professes to follow) *demonstrated* the Divine Omnipotence and his (Pegis') refusal to accept Ockham's statement of a consequence of this fact, on the grounds that this would be a theologism! (cfr. "Concerning William of Ockham", p. 468). The confusion of the paragraph in which Professor Pegis discusses the respective attitudes of Ockham and St. Thomas towards the Divine Omnipotence is due to a misunderstanding of the terms "proof" and "demonstration". And the "issue" which Professor Pegis discovers on the basis of this misunderstanding is then seen to be one of his own creation.

<sup>68</sup> As a matter of fact, Ockham does not say that God's Omnipotence cannot be known by unaided reason; he merely says that it cannot be demonstrated in the strict sense.

<sup>69</sup> Cfr. P. Boehner, "The Notitia Intuitiva of Non-existents", pp. 228-9.

12) First of all, Ockham himself never formulated this question in precisely this way. Therefore it is wrong to expect to find a precise answer to this question in Ockham's writings.<sup>70</sup>

13) But the question naturally arises when we consider Ockham's statements to the effect that intuitive cognition is "*illa qua cognoscitur res esse, quando est, et NON ESSE QUANDO NON EST*". Such statements occur when Ockham is referring to intuitive cognition *in general*, prior to his restriction of intuitive cognition of *non-existents* to the *supernatural* order, and without any hint of or reference to this restriction: cfr., for example, references in note 58 *supra*.

14) One instance in which intuitive cognition is a partial cause of assent to a judgment of *non-existence* is given when God causes or conserves in us an intuitive cognition of a *non-existent*. For then, by virtue of the supernaturally caused intuitive cognition *and* in virtue of the fact that the other partial cause (namely, the object in its own proper existence) is lacking, the intellect gives evident assent to the judgment: This object is NOT existing (cfr. 5a above).

15) But this instance in the supernatural order is not the only instance. For in the natural order also we give evident assent to judgments of *non-existence*. For example, I can give evident assent to the proposition: Socrates is not black, if I know evidently that Socrates is white. Now since evident knowledge of contingent facts is only possible on the basis of intuitive cognition, and since intuitive cognition of a non-existent is not possible in the natural order, it follows that intuitive cognition must somehow be the cause of this assent to a judgment of non-existence (e.g., blackness is not in Socrates). Therefore Ockham's repeated statements to the effect that intuitive cognition is the basis for evident assent to judgments of *non-existence* (as well as of existence) cannot be interpreted as referring *only* to the instance in the supernatural order in which intuitive cognition of a *non-existent* is given by Divine intervention.

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

16) Thus it would seem that, according to Ockham's principles, intuitive cognition is somehow the cause, even in the natural order, of evident assent to judgments of *non-existence*.<sup>71</sup>

17) But when we ask HOW this is possible, or rather HOW intuitive cognition of an *existent* (which is all that is possible in the natural order) can be the basis for assent to a judgment of *non-existence*, we are asking Ockham a question that he never formulated. Hence we are asking him a question that he never answered. So the most we can do is try to give an answer "*ad mentem Ockham*".<sup>72</sup>

18) In this sense, our answer would be that evident assent to judgments of *non-existence* is based *indirectly* on the intuitive cognition of an *existent*, by some kind of inference.<sup>73</sup> Hence, though evident, such knowledge would not be *immediately* evident.

And let that suffice for our discussion on intuitive cognition of non-existents, both as regards the act of apprehending *non-existents* (which is only supernaturally possible) and the act of giving assent to a judgment of *non-existence* (which is possible both naturally and supernaturally). From what we have said it

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<sup>71</sup> Hence Fr. Boehner does not seem to be quite correct when he says that "it becomes clear . . . that intuitive knowledge, *supernaturally* caused or conserved, of a *non-existent* is the basis of the evident assent to a proposition which states that the thing seen does not exist or is not present. This is *always* meant by Ockham when he speaks of *notitia intuitiva* as that knowledge by which I evidently know that a thing exists or does not exist" ("The Notitia Intuitiva of non-existents . . .", p. 231). Fr. Boehner himself tacitly admits that this is not *always* the case when he discusses the problem of evident assent to judgments of *non-existence* "*ad mentem Ockham*" (ibid., p. 239). He should perhaps have rather said: "This is always meant by Ockham when he speaks of *notitia intuitiva* as that knowledge by which I know from IMMEDIATE evidence that a thing exists or does not exist."

<sup>72</sup> Cfr. *ibid.*, p. 238 and p. 239.

<sup>73</sup> This problem was not much discussed by any scholastic. For a good account of the problem as it appears to modern philosophers cfr. Bertrand Russell, *An Enquiry into Meaning and Truth* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1940).



should be clear that Ockham's teaching on this point is by no means sceptical in principle or practise. Therefore it is wrong to say with Michalski that it is an "idée destructrice".<sup>74</sup> It is equally wrong to refer to it as an idea which we find "sans cesse"<sup>75</sup> in Ockham, if by that we mean that it dominated the whole of Ockham's thought on this point. Actually it is the critics of Ockham who have magnified this molehill into a mountain which obscures their view of the more important and positive contributions of Ockham. When their misapprehensions regarding Ockham's "Omnipotentism" and "scepticism" have been cleared away (as we have tried to clear them away in the preceding discussion), the mountain of their own creation is reduced to its true historical size and we are left in a position to discuss, on rational grounds, the more significant results of Ockham's analysis of evident knowledge and its basis, intuitive cognition.

One of the most important of these results is his teaching on the question of the *species intelligibilis*. But before proceeding to a discussion of that problem it is necessary to give an account of his teaching on perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition, which is developed in *Rep.* II, q. 15. This text also has been analysed and commented on by Fr. Boehner,<sup>76</sup> so we shall limit ourselves here to a brief summary and a few additional remarks necessary for our general purpose.

Again the influence of Scotus is immediately apparent. It will be recalled that Scotus discussed this distinction briefly in *Oxon.* III, d. 14, q. 3 (XIV, 524); that he referred it to knowledge of the future as well as to knowledge of the past; but that he developed it especially as regards knowledge of the past. Ockham follows him in adopting the distinction, in referring it to knowledge both of the past and the future, and in saying practically nothing

<sup>74</sup> Cfr. note 29 above.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Cfr. "The Notitia Intuitiva of Non-existents . . .", pp. 225-227.

about its connection with knowledge of the future.<sup>77</sup> Hence, in *Rep.* II, q. 15 we find him defining imperfect intuitive cognition as that knowledge by means of which (*per quam*) I judge that a thing once was or was not:

Cognitio autem intuitiva imperfecta est illa, per quam iudicamus rem aliquando fuisse vel non fuisse; et haec dicitur cognitio recordativa (*loc. cit.*, G, p. 250).

Like Scotus, he realizes that abstractive cognition cannot be the basis for existential propositions, whether of the past, the present, or the future. At the same time, perfect intuitive cognition (which is of *present* existents only) cannot be the basis for judgments about the *past*. Yet intuitive cognition must play some role in the generation of knowledge about the past, because such knowledge is always existential (e.g., "this thing existed at such and such a time"). The problem to be decided is: *What* role does intuitive cognition play in the generation of this knowledge?

Ockham advances two theories:—

1) Along with an intuitive cognition of a thing, and while this intuitive cognition lasts, I have at one and the same time an abstractive cognition of the same thing: "... *stante cognitione intuitiva alicuius rei, habeo SIMUL ET SEMEL cognitionem abstractivam eiusdem rei.*"<sup>78</sup> This abstractive cognition is partial cause of the *habitus* which produces imperfect intuitive cognition.

2) Abstractive cognition is *not* concomitant with intuitive cognition, and does not play any role in the generation of imperfect intuitive cognition, but intuitive cognition itself causes a *habitus* which produces imperfect intuitive cognition.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Regarding intuitive cognition and knowledge of future contingent facts, cfr. *Rep.* II, q. 16, JJ, and q. 20, E; on this point, however, Ockham is no more enlightening than Scotus.

<sup>78</sup> *Rep.* II, q. 15, G, p. 250.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, K, p. 252: Aliter potest dici quod habitus generatur ex cognitione intuitiva sicut ex causa partiali et negari cognitio abstractiva, quae simul ponitur cum intuitiva . . . Igitur, ut videtur, cum cognitione intuitiva imperfecta non manet cognitio abstractiva eiusdem, sed ex cognitione intuitiva frequentata generatur habitus inclinans ad cognitionem abstractivam sive intuitivam imperfectam.

This is the order in which these two theories occur in *Rep.* II, q. 15. But to avoid a possible source of confusion we must note that Fr. Boehner reverses this order when discussing Ockham's final choice of one of these theories.<sup>80</sup> For, on the basis of manuscripts, Fr. Boehner believes that he has discovered the following development in Ockham's ideas: originally he favored what we have listed as the *second* possibility, but later favored what we have listed as the *first* possibility. In the chronology of Ockham's mental development, therefore, the "*prima opinio*" in *Rep.* II, q. 15 becomes his *second* or later theory; and the "*secunda opinio*" is revealed as having been an earlier theory which he no longer favors.<sup>81</sup>

If Fr. Boehner's conclusions are correct, we must say that Ockham seems to favor the following explanation of the relations between intuitive and abstractive cognition, and perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition:—

(a) intuitive and abstractive cognitions of one and the same object occur simultaneously or concomitantly;

(b) the *abstractive* cognition which occurs at this instant is a partial cause which concurs with the intellect in the generation of a *habitus* or disposition which inclines towards *imperfect intuitive* cognition whereby I can judge that an object apprehended in the past by *perfect intuitive* cognition existed in the past.<sup>82</sup>

This explanation raises a crop of puzzling questions. In the first place, why does Ockham say that *anything* apart from intuitive and abstractive cognition is necessary in order that we may assent to judgments about the past? In other words, why is the *habitus* posited? The answer to this is implicit in his definitions of intuitive and abstractive cognition. Abstractive

<sup>80</sup> *Loc. cit.* note 76 above, p. 226.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 226-7.

<sup>82</sup> Et est hic notandum, quod stante cognitione intuitiva alicuius rei, habeo simul et semel cognitionem abstractivam eiusdem rei. Et illa cognitio abstractiva est causa partialis concurrens cum intellectu ad generandum habitum inclinantem ad cognitionem intuitivam imperfectam, per quam iudico rem aliquando fuisse (*Rep.* II, q. 15, G, p. 250).



cognition, by definition, cannot be the basis for assent to existential propositions. And intuitive cognition regards only *present* existents. Therefore something else must enter in. The next question is: What is this "something else"? Ockham says it is a *habitus*. And what is a *habitus*? Ockham tells us that in this case it is something inclining the intellect to elicit an act which formerly it was not inclined to elicit; therefore a disposition or an inclination to produce a new act,<sup>83</sup> namely, an act of *imperfect* intuitive cognition.

Granted that "something" besides perfect intuitive and abstractive cognition is necessary to enable the intellect to elicit the "new" act that we have seen to be necessary, our next question is: Why does Ockham say that this "something" is a *habitus*? His answer to that is as follows: Suppose I have intuitive cognition of an actually present and existing object (and, naturally speaking, that is the only kind of object I can know intuitively); then suppose that this object is destroyed or removed from my field of perception. What happens? Experience teaches me that I can *immediately* consider that object and form a proposition about it, such as: "This object existed a moment ago". And I can evidently assent to that proposition. Now the fact that I can elicit such an act *promptly* and *immediately* indicates that the intellect was disposed to elicit such an act. And that is

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<sup>83</sup> Not "to reproduce the original act, viz., the imperfect intuitive knowledge" as Fr. Boehner says (*loc. cit.*, p. 226), because the "original" acts are acts of perfect intuitive and abstractive cognition which, by definition, are incapable of being the basis for judgments about the past. Ockham says: *Ergo si habitus inclinans ad cognitionem intuitivam imperfectam generetur ex aliquo actu cognitivo, illa cognitio erit abstractiva, et illa erit simul cum cognitione intuitiva perfecta, quia statim post cognitionem intuitivam perfectam, sive obiectum destruatursive sit absens, potest intellectus eandem rem, quam prius vidit intuitive, considerare et formare hoc complexum: haec res aliquando fuit, et assentire evidenter, sicut quilibet experitur in seipso. Ergo oportet ponere aliquem habitum inclinantem ad istum actum; quia ex quo intellectus potest modo prompte elicere istum actum post cognitionem intuitivam, et ante non potuit, ergo nunc est aliquid inclinans intellectum ad istum actum, quod prius non fuit*: Illud autem vocamus habitum (*Rep. II*, q. 15, G, 250-1; italics mine).

all that I mean by a *habitus*—a disposition to elicit an act that I could not elicit formerly.<sup>84</sup>

But why does he say that intuitive and abstractive cognitions must be concomitant or simultaneous? The answer to the question is to be found in the fact of experience just described. Since, according to Aristotelian psychology, intuitive cognition cannot be the cause of the *habitus* we have postulated (because a *habitus* is supposed to be produced by similar acts and inclines to similar acts, whereas imperfect intuitive cognition is really a specific abstractive knowledge), the only possibilities left are: (a) a concomitant abstractive cognition, or (b) a subsequent abstractive cognition. But, as we have seen, the intellect can elicit the act of assent to a judgment about the past *immediately* after the object is destroyed or removed from our field of perception; therefore before any act of abstractive cognition *subsequent* to the act of perfect intuitive cognition. This rules out the second possibility. Therefore we must conclude that perfect intuitive and abstractive cognitions are simultaneous or concomitant.<sup>85</sup>

But Ockham says that, strictly speaking, imperfect intuitive cognition is an abstractive cognition.<sup>86</sup> This would seem to argue against his former contention that there is only *one* abstractive cognition, given *simul et semel* (or concomitantly) with perfect intuitive cognition. But this is a difficulty of terminology only, which can be solved as follows:—

1) The distinction between perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition is clear. Perfect intuitive cognition is impossible without the actual presence of its object; whilst imperfect intuitive cognition can be had without the actual existence or presence of the

<sup>84</sup> Cfr. text quoted in preceding note.

<sup>85</sup> Sed ille habitus sic inclinans intellectum non potest causari a cognitione intuitiva perfecta, sicut ostensum est, nec ab aliqua cognitione abstractiva sequente cognitionem intuitivam, quia illa est prima per positum, quae habetur post cognitionem intuitivam, ergo oportet necessario ponere aliquam cognitionem abstractivam simul cum cognitione intuitiva perfecta existente, quae est causa partialis cum intellectu ad generantem istum habitum sic intellectum inclinantem (*ibid.*).

<sup>86</sup> Cognitione intuitiva imperfecta est simpliciter abstractiva (*ibid.*).

object, even when existence is affirmed of this object (i.e., when it is affirmed that this object existed *in the past*).<sup>87</sup>

2) The distinction between *imperfect intuitive* cognition and the *abstractive* cognition which accompanies *perfect* intuitive cognition is also clear. For this concomitant abstractive cognition is a partial cause of the *habitus* which disposes the intellect to elicit imperfect intuitive cognition.

3) Therefore the distinction between the abstractive cognition which is imperfect intuitive cognition and the abstractive cognition which accompanies perfect intuitive cognition is also clear. It is, as explained in (2) above, a distinction between a (partial) cause and an effect.

4) Therefore, just as we can distinguish between perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition, we can distinguish two kinds of abstractive cognition: (a) the abstractive cognition which accompanies perfect intuitive cognition—*abstractiva prima*, and (b) the abstractive cognition which is identical with imperfect intuitive cognition—*abstractiva secunda*. We might call the first “actual” abstractive cognition, and the second “habitual” abstractive cognition. And what is the relation between actual and habitual abstractive cognition? Ockham answers, as we have already seen: The first (actual) abstractive cognition is a partial cause of a *habitus* or disposition which inclines the intellect to elicit an act of imperfect intuitive cognition—i.e., of habitual abstractive cognition.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Sed cognitio intuitiva subdividitur: quia quaedam est perfecta, quaedam imperfecta. Perfecta cognitio intuitiva est illa, de qua dictum est, quod est cognitio experimentalis, qua cognosco rem esse etc. Et illa cognitio . . . est causa assensus propositionis universalis formatae stante cognitione perfecta. Cognitio autem intuitiva imperfecta est illa, per quam iudicamus rem aliquando fuisse vel non fuisse; et haec dicitur cognitio recordativa (*ibid.*). Now compare this preliminary formulation of the difference between the two with the following formulation, which comes *after* a discussion of the implications of this preliminary formulation: Ex dictis apparet differentia inter cognitionem intuitivam perfectam et imperfectam: qua prima non est nec esse potest naturaliter, nisi obiectum existat; secunda potest esse, etsi obiectum destruat (*ibid.*, M, p. 253).

<sup>88</sup> It should be noted that Ockham does not use the terminology “actual and habitual” abstractive cognition. But he does have the distinction we



Now even though these distinctions are clear enough, the problem still remains: How is this habitual abstractive cognition (or imperfect intuitive cognition) capable of being the basis of an assent to a judgment of existence—since abstractive cognition, by definition, is indifferent to existence and non-existence? Ockham answers by saying that the *first perfect intuitive* cognition is a partial cause of the *first actual abstractive* cognition—i.e., of the abstractive cognition which always accompanies perfect intuitive cognition. This first actual or concomitant abstractive is in turn the partial cause of the *habitus* which inclines the intellect to elicit the *second abstractive* cognition which is imperfect intuitive cognition. This imperfect intuitive cognition (or habitual abstractive cognition) is the basis for assent to judgments about the past:

Ponendo cognitionem intuitivam habere semper (necessario) abstractivam incomplexam, tunc cognitio intuitiva erit causa partialis illius cognitionis abstractivae; et illa abstractiva est causa partialis respectu habitus inclinantis ad aliam cognitionem abstractivam consimilem illi cognitioni, ex qua generatur habitus sic inclinans (*Rep.* II, q. 15, G, p. 251).<sup>89</sup>

This establishes a very definite causal relation between perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition. And though Ockham does not say so expressly here, it is in virtue of this causal connection that we are able to assent to judgments about the past.<sup>90</sup>

have drawn, and we have coined this terminology to bring out the distinction more clearly.

<sup>89</sup> This is part of the later addition made by Ockham to strengthen the position he seems finally to have adopted on the question of the causal relation between perfect intuitive and abstractive cognition (cfr. P. Boehner, "The Notitia Intuitiva of Non-existents . . .", p. 226 and p. 244). Unless read very carefully this text may give the impression that Ockham speaks of a *second act* of abstractive cognition which generates the *habitus*: illa abstractiva est causa partialis habitus inclinantis ad aliam cognitionem abstractivam . . . But a correct reading of the text *in its context* shows that the clause "ex qua generatur habitus" is an adjectival clause modifying "illi cognitioni" and not a relative clause.

<sup>90</sup> Cfr. *Rep.* II, q. 15, U, p. 258 and note 102 below.

This explanation (and, incidentally, our exegesis of the whole section on imperfect intuitive cognition) is borne out by Ockham's concluding remark on this point:

Ideo licet illa cognitio, per quam iudico rem aliquando fuisse, sit simpliciter abstractiva, quia tamen mediante ea assentio et iudico rem aliquando fuisse et non mediantibus illis duabus cognitionibus (scil. intuitiva perfecta et abstractiva concomitans), ideo respectu earum potest dici intuitiva, imperfecta tamen (*ibid.*, M, p. 253; parentheses mine).

There are several points in this explanation that are not very clear. In the first place, why does Ockham say that perfect intuitive cognition is a partial cause of the abstractive cognition which is said to be concomitant with it?<sup>91</sup> He gives no reason for this, but leaves us to infer that it is necessary to establish the causal relation between perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition—which causal relation is necessary to explain how an *abstractive* cognition (which is what imperfect intuitive cognition really is) can be the basis of judgments about past existence. Secondly, no one experiences (a) either an abstractive cognition which is concomitant with perfect intuitive cognition, or (b) the causality which perfect intuitive cognition is supposed to exercise on the first abstractive cognition.<sup>92</sup>

This Aristotelian *a priorism* is not at all like Ockham who is, as we have seen, the champion of experience as a source of evidence in psychology. It must be admitted that he did deduce

<sup>91</sup> Perhaps "concomitant" is not the best word to use; for obviously if two things are strictly concomitant, one cannot be the cause of the other. Ockham says that perfect intuitive and first abstractive cognitions are "simul et semel". By this he means that these two cognitive acts "stant simul" after having been caused separately and one before the other.

<sup>92</sup> This lack of experience is mentioned in the *secunda opinio*—i.e., the theory which Ockham originally advanced and then changed in favor of the one we have been discussing; cfr.: *Aliter potest dici, quod habitus generatur ex cognitione intuitiva ex causa partiali et negari cognitio abstractiva, quae simul ponitur cum intuitiva; tum quia nullus experitur, quod simul et semel cognoscat eandem rem intuitive et abstractive, et hoc loquendo de cognitione abstractiva rei in se, immo potius experitur homo oppositum . . .* (Rep. II, q. 15, K, p. 252).

the necessity of a *habitus* from experience, but actually this experience does not make it clear why a *habitus* precisely, and nothing else, should be postulated. All that his argument really proves is that "something" besides perfect intuitive and first abstractive cognitions is called for. Why then does he insist on a *habitus*, especially since this insistence makes him assert that perfect intuitive cognition is a partial cause of the first abstractive cognition?

The answer to that question is perhaps to be found in two facts: (1) Scotus (or at least his interpreters) had apparently taught that this "something" which Ockham identifies as a *habitus* was a *species* of some sort.<sup>93</sup> (2) But the whole point of the question where Ockham discusses perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition is to show that a *species* is not necessary for *any* kind of cognition. If that is so, the following section on the problem of a *species intelligibilis* receives a new orientation and significance.

In any case, and whether or not we accept Ockham's explanation of imperfect intuitive cognition, we must admit that he tried hard to develop the seeds of the idea which Scotus had mentioned briefly in the *Oxonien*se. And whether or not we agree with him in his assumption of a *habitus*, I think we will have to agree with him in his denial of a *species*.

#### (ii) The Problem of a *Species Intelligibilis*.

On the basis of the distinction we have discussed in the preceding section, Ockham proposes to prove three preliminary conclusions:—

1) To have *intuitive* cognition it is not necessary to posit anything besides the intellect and the thing known; no *species* whatsoever is required.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Cfr. *supra*, ch. 2, n. 56.

<sup>94</sup> His visis probo aliquas conclusiones: Prima est, quod ad cognitionem intuitivam habendam non oportet aliquid ponere praeter intellectum et rem cognitam et nullam speciem penitus (*Rep.* II, q. 15, O, p. 254).



2) To have *abstractive* cognition it is necessary to posit something besides the intellect and the object known—something previous to the act of abstractive cognition.<sup>95</sup>

3) This "something" is not a *species*, but a *habitus*.<sup>96</sup>

Thus Ockham attacks the problem of abstractive cognition in its broadest aspect, and hence incidentally attacks the problem of imperfect intuitive again (in Conclusions 2 and 3), but from another angle, namely, from the point of view of the necessity of a *species intelligibilis*. This supports our suggestion (a) that Ockham was not satisfied with the explanation given in the preceding section of this question, and (b) that his preoccupation with the *habitus* in that section was motivated by his interest in the *species* problem.

*Ad 1:* His denial of the necessity for a *species* in intuitive cognition is based on the principle of economy (which has come to be known as "Ockham's Razor", though Ockham certainly was not the first to formulate or to use it):<sup>97</sup>

Quia frustra fit per plura, quod potest aequaliter fieri per pauciora; sed per intellectum et rem visam sine omni specie potest fieri cognitio intuitiva; ergo etc. (*Rep.* II, q. 15, O, p. 254).

His proof of the minor repeats almost literally the words of Scotus in *Oxon.* IV, d. 45, q. 2, n. 12 (XX, 304) — but with a significant difference. Scotus says:

quia activo sufficienti, et passivo sufficienti sufficienter approximatis, potest sequi effectus . . . intellectus agens cum obiecto est sufficiens causa activa *speciei intelligibilis* . . . intellectus autem possibilis est sufficienter receptivus.

<sup>95</sup> Secunda conclusio est, quod ad habendam cognitionem abstractivam oportet necessario ponere aliquid praeivum praeter obiectum et intellectum (*ibid.*, Q, p. 255).

<sup>96</sup> Tertia conclusio est, quod illud derelictum non est species sed habitus (*ibid.*, R, p. 255).

<sup>97</sup> It is used, for instance, by Duns Scotus in his *De Primo Principio* (ch. 2, concl. 15 and ch. 3, concl. 6) where he refers it to Aristotle, *Physics*, Bk. I; cfr. also W. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Physics, A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Oxford, 1936), p. 487.

Ockham says (and note the interesting variations):

quia posito activo sufficienti et passivo et ipsis approximatis potest poni effectus *sine omni alio*; intellectus autem agens cum obiecto sunt agentia sufficientia respectu illius cognitionis; possibilis est patiens sufficiens; ergo etc. (*Rep.* II, q. 15, O, p. 254).

The resemblance is too close to be merely accidental. The difference is too striking to be ignored. Ockham uses Scotus' own principles to show him that they prove that a *species* is not necessary at all.

In addition to invoking the principle of economy, Ockham points out that there is neither experiential evidence for a *species* in intuitive cognition (i.e., no one is conscious of any *species*), nor is there any evident reason based on principles *per se nota* that would force us to posit a *species* despite our lack of experiential evidence:

Nihil ponendum est necessario requiri naturaliter ad aliquem effectum, nisi ad illud inducat ratio certa procedens ex per se notis vel experientia certa; sed neutrum istorum inducit ad ponendum speciem; ergo etc. (*ibid.*).

Even those who defend the *species* theory admit that there is no experiential evidence for it. But they maintain that "evident metaphysical principles" force us to conclude that there is a *species*. Ockham denies this in maintaining that the object and the intellect are sufficient causes for intuitive cognition, and in demanding a more critical criterion for "evident principles"—namely, certitude based either on experience or *principia per se nota*; interesting speculations are not enough.

Moreover, if a *species* were necessary for intuitive cognition, this *species* could be conserved (naturally) even though the object were absent; and then this conserved *species* could cause an intuitive cognition of an absent object, and even of a non-existent. This is false and contrary to experience; ergo . . .<sup>98</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Item: Si species ponatur necessario requiri ad cognitionem intuitivam sicut causa eius efficiens, cum illa species potest conservari in absentia obiecti, potest causare naturaliter cognitionem intuitivam in absentia rei:

*Ad. 2:* It will be recalled that we found two kinds of abstractive cognition discussed in the previous section of this question, namely, concomitant (or first actual) abstractive cognition and imperfect intuitive (or habitual abstractive) cognition. In *ord. Prol. q. 1* (Z, p. 24) Ockham has also pointed out that universal knowledge is, in a sense, abstractive cognition.<sup>99</sup> Therefore these *three* kinds of abstractive cognition are referred to in this discussion of the *species* problem. Ockham's second "*conclusio*" is an attempt to prove, in more technical language, that "something" is necessary besides the intellect and the object in order that we may have abstractive cognition in any of these three senses. Admitting this fact, we are more interested in the question: What is this "something"?

*Ad 3:* Ockham gives at least twelve arguments to show that this "something" is not a *species* but a *habitus*. We shall analyse some of these arguments presently; but first of all there are several points to be clarified:—

Ockham admits that a *habitus* is previous to that intellectual act of which it is the partial cause.<sup>100</sup> But is not his objection to the *species* theory based precisely on the fact that a *species* is also previous to the cognitive act, and therefore a medium between intellect and object? The answer to that is that not everything previous to the intellectual act is a medium between intellect and object. This distinction is best brought out by considering the three basic intellectual acts under discussion:

(a) for perfect intuitive cognition there is neither a medium between the intellect and the object, nor is there anything previous to the intellectual act except the object and the intellect itself.

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quod est falsum et contra experientiam. (*Rep. II, q. 15, P, p. 254*). This is reminiscent of Scotus' assertion that a *species* is, of its very nature, indifferent to existence and non-existence—from which fact he deduced the necessity of intuitive cognition.

<sup>99</sup> Cfr. n. 19 above.

<sup>100</sup> *Secunda conclusio* est, quod ad habendam cognitionem abstractivam oportet necessario ponere aliquid *praeivum* praeter obiectum et intellectum (*Rep. II, q. 15, Q, p. 255*).



(b) as for abstractive cognition, we must distinguish between what we have called actual abstractive cognition (*prima abstractiva*) and habitual abstractive cognition (imperfect intuitive or *secunda abstractiva*):

(i) actual abstractive cognition is caused by perfect intuitive cognition, and therefore perfect intuitive cognition is something previous to the act of abstractive cognition; but since perfect intuitive cognition is an intellectual act, there is no medium between the object and the intellect itself.

(ii) habitual abstractive cognition (*secunda abstractiva*) is caused by the intellect and actual abstractive cognition (*prima abstractiva*). So again there is no medium between intellect and object, but only between different intellectual acts.<sup>101</sup>

(c) on the other hand, a *species* is both previous to every cognitive act that is dependent on it and a medium between the object and the intellect in that act. It was precisely to eliminate this medium between intellect and object that Ockham argued against the hypothesis of a *species*. For to his way of thinking such a medium weakens the certitude of our knowledge. If we cannot grasp reality immediately, how can we ever be sure that we grasp reality at all?

(d) finally, since all knowledge is subsequent to, and based ultimately on, perfect intuitive cognition, and since there is no medium between intellect and object in such cognition, it follows

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<sup>101</sup> Loquendo vero de cognitione abstractiva, tunc aut loquimur de illa, quae semper consequitur intuitivam, aut de illa, quae habetur post corruptionem intuitivae. Si primo modo, sic ad illum requiritur obiectum et intellectus et cognitio intuitiva tamquam causae partiales. Quod probatur sicut prius . . . Si secundo modo loquimur, sic ad illam requiritur intellectus et habitus generatus ex cognitione abstractiva elicitā simul cum intuitiva; et non requiritur obiectum in ista secunda cognitione abstractiva tamquam causa partialis, quia illa potest haberi, etsi obiectum annihilatur. Et est utraque istarum notitiarum abstractivarum incomplexa. Et ista secunda est causa partialis notitiae complexae, qua iudico, quod res aliquando fuit (*ibid.*, U, p. 258). This text, incidentally, makes explicit the causal relation between perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition which was not so clearly expressed in the first discussion of these two modes of cognition (cfr. our comments on *Rep.* II, q. 15, and note 90 above).

that there is no medium between intellect and object in any kind of cognition.

With these distinctions in mind we can now proceed to an analysis of some of the arguments that Ockham uses to disprove the *species* hypothesis. We select the following as being the most interesting from both an historical and a systematical point of view:—

A *species* is usually posited for one or more of the following reasons:

1. To explain how the intellect “assimilates” the object;
2. to explain how the object is represented to the intellect;
3. to explain how intellection is caused;
4. to explain how the potency of the passive intellect is determined or reduced to act;
5. to explain the union between intellect and object in terms of “that which is moved” and “that which moves”.

*Ad 1:* Ockham’s most interesting argument against the assimilation hypothesis is to show that a *species* does not explain assimilation at all. For, if a *species* is required in order that the object be assimilated to the intellect, another *species* must be required in order that the first *species* may be assimilated, and a third *species* would be necessary for the assimilation of the second, and so on *ad infinitum*.<sup>102</sup> In any case, there is as much assimilation in intuitive cognition as in any abstractive cognition, and we have shown that no *species* is necessary for intuitive cognition; *ergo* . . .

*Ad 2:* As we have shown, there is no *species* necessary to represent the object to the intellect in intuitive cognition; therefore no species is necessary in abstractive cognition.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, if

<sup>102</sup> Si dicis, quod requiritur prima species ad assimilandum obiectum agens intellectionem ipsi passo ad hoc, quod recipiat intellectionem.—Contra: Eodem modo dico ego, quod illa species recepta requirit aliam speciem praeiviam ad assimilandum intellectionem agentis ad hoc, quod recipiat istam speciem, quam tu ponis, et illa species requirit aliam, et sic in infinitum (*Rep.* II, q. 15, T, p. 256).

<sup>103</sup> Nec debet species poni propter repraesentationem: Quia in notitia intuitiva non requiritur aliquod repraesentans aliud ab obiecto et actu, ut supra patet; ergo nec in abstractiva . . . (*ibid.*, p. 257).

anything represents the object to the intellect, the *repraesentans* is meaningless unless the *repraesentatum* is known previously. In other words, the object must be known before the *species* if the *species* is to have any meaning at all. Therefore a *species* cannot be considered as something which makes the object known by representation.<sup>104</sup>

*Ad 3:* Those who posit a *species* as a cause of intellection do so because, according to them, a material thing cannot act on a spiritual thing. But the active intellect is just as "spiritual" as the passive intellect, so how can a material *species* act as even a partial cause with the active intellect in producing an immaterial *species*?<sup>105</sup> This is the old problem of the "dematerialization" of the *species sensibilis*. Ockham's argument might well be extended to ask: If the mysterious "light" of the active intellect can dematerialize a *species sensibilis* (which is purely material), why cannot this "light" dematerialize the material object directly, without recourse to a *species*? The *species* doesn't solve the problem of dematerialization at all. It simply transfers it.<sup>106</sup>

*Ad 4:* The object itself is sufficient to determine the potency of

<sup>104</sup> Item: Repraesentatum oportet esse prius cognitum; aliter repraesentans numquam duceret in cognitionem repraesentati tamquam in simile. Exemplum: Statua Herculis, numquam ducit me in cognitionem Herculis, nisi prius vidissem Herculem, nec aliter possum scire, utrum statua sit similis aut non; sed secundum ponentes speciem species est aliquid prae-vium omni actui intelligendi obiectum; ergo non potest poni propter repraesentationem obiecti (*ibid.*).

<sup>105</sup> Nec debet poni species propter causationem intellectus: Quia secundum eos corporale et materiale non potest agere in spirituale, ideo oportet ponere talem speciem in intellectu.—Sed contra: Sicut corporale et materiale non potest esse causa partialis immediata respectu intellectionis, quae recipitur in spirituali, quia in intellectu possibili et est spiritualis qualitas, ita nec materiale potest esse causa partialis cum intellectu agente concurrens ad producendum speciem, quae est spiritualis in intellectu possibili, qui est etiam spiritualis (*ibid.*).

<sup>106</sup> Vel: sicut tu ponis, quod corporale potest esse causa partialis ad causandum speciem in spirituali, ita ego pono, quod corporale est causa partialis ad causandum intellectionem in spirituali (*ibid.*).



the intellect, or at least it is not less sufficient than a *species*. So why postulate a *species*?<sup>107</sup>

*Ad 5:* If a *species* is necessary to unite the mover (the object) with the moved (the intellect), another *species* must be necessary to unite the object and the first *species* in the intellect, and so on *ad infinitum*. For, in order that the object (as mover) be able to cause the first *species* in the intellect, the object must be united to this *species*; and for the same reason that a *species* is postulated as that which unites object and intellect as mover and moved, another *species* would have to be postulated in order to unite object and *species* as mover and moved.<sup>108</sup>

But these arguments do not cover all of the reasons given in favor of the *species* hypothesis. Ockham realizes this, and answers some more of these classical arguments in a discussion of five *dubia*. Two of these *dubia* raise the crucial question of knowledge of singulars; in our edition they are numbered I and III. Another raises the problem of the connexion between our intellect and phantasms; this is numbered V, 5. The other *dubia* are of relatively minor interest.

*Dubium I:* By definition, the intellect abstracts from the material conditions of things (*intellectus est universalium*, etc.). But neither a singular nor intuitive cognition abstracts from these material conditions. Therefore intellectual cognition of singulars and intellectual intuitive cognition are impossible.

Ockham has already answered this objection in explaining the true meaning of the Aristotelian "axiom" which is at the root of

<sup>107</sup> Nec debet poni species propter determinationem potentiae: Quia omnis potentia passiva sufficienter determinatur per agens sufficiens, maxime quando ipsamet potentia est activa; sed agens sufficiens est obiectum et intellectum, ut probatum est; ergo etc. (*ibid.*; cfr. O, p. 254).

<sup>108</sup> Nec debet poni propter unionem obiecti cum potentia tamquam moventis et moti; quia tunc eodem modo arguerem, quod ante illam speciem oportet ponere aliam, quia ad hoc, quod obiectum possit causare primam speciem in intellectu, requiritur, quod uniatur sibi, sicut requiritur unio ad hoc, quod causet intellectionem, et hoc erit per aliam speciem, et sic in infinitum (*ibid.*).

it.<sup>109</sup> Here he contents himself with repeating two of Scotus' arguments against this objection:

(a) knowledge of singulars and intuitive cognition are had by the senses; and what is possible for an inferior faculty is possible for a superior faculty; therefore . . .

(b) that knowledge which includes the spatial and temporal qualifications of things is more perfect than a knowledge which does not encompass these qualifications; therefore intuitive cognition is more perfect than abstractive cognition. But the senses are capable of intuitive cognition. If the intellect were not likewise capable of intuitive cognition, this would make sense cognition more perfect than intellectual cognition.<sup>110</sup>

*Dubium V, 5:* A *habitus* would render the phantasm unnecessary. For a *habitus* renders the intellect *in potentia accidentalī*, and hence eliminates the necessity of anything outside the intellect to reduce it to act; but the phantasm is usually considered as the "*motor extrinsecus*" which determines the intellect to act; ergo . . .<sup>111</sup>

Ockham points out that this argument applies to the *species* as well as to a *habitus*; and therefore the *species* cannot be considered the *motor extrinsecus* which reduces the intellect to act. Therefore no "conversion to the phantasm" can be considered as a partial cause of cognition. However, the phantasm is necessary for cognition insofar as a proper disposition of all the cognitive powers is a necessary prerequisite for knowledge.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>109</sup> Cfr. references in note 54 above.

<sup>110</sup> Cfr. Scotus' "Proof *per simile*" (*Quodl.* q. 6 and *Oxon.* II, d. 3, q. 9) and Minor Works List, Concl. 4.

<sup>111</sup> Si sic, tunc intellectus in intelligendo non indiget phantasmate; quia quando aliquis est in potentia accidentali non indiget motore extrinseco ad hoc, quod exeat in actum; si ergo talis habitus sit in intellectu et non species, cum phantasma sit motor extrinsecus, sequitur conclusio; ergo etc. (*Rep.* II, q. 15, Z, p. 261).

<sup>112</sup> . . . dico, quod ita concludit contra ponentes speciem sicut contra me. Unde sicut ipsi dicunt, quod praeter speciem non requiritur motor extrinsecus ad actum intelligendi, ita ego dico, quod praeter habitum non requiritur alius motor extrinsecus tamquam causa partialis respectu actus

These are only a few of the arguments Ockham gives to show that there is no evidence for the *species* hypothesis. But they are cogent arguments, and deserve to be considered on their merits alone.<sup>113</sup> Until his arguments are refuted philosophically we can agree with his general conclusions:

1. For sensitive intuitive cognition, all that is necessary is the corporeal sense, and no *species* whatsoever.

2. For intellectual intuitive cognition, all that is necessary is the intellect and the object, and no *species* whatsoever.

3. For actual abstractive cognition (*abstractiva prima*) all that is necessary is the intellect and perfect intuitive cognition.

4. For subsequent abstractive cognition, a *habitus* is necessary

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intelligendi nec phantasma nec aliquid in sensu, et hoc in cognitione abstractiva, licet forte sit oppositum in cognitione intuitiva. Et ideo nulla talis conversio ad phantasma requiritur tamquam ad causam partialem in cognitione. Tamen ad hoc quod aliquis sit in potentia accidentali ad intelligendum, requiritur debita complexio et dispositio corporis et omnium virtutum et per consequens phantasie; et si non habeat talem dispositionem, non potest intelligere, ut patet in pueris et furiosis. Et ideo sic ad intellectionem requiritur phantasma et aliter non (*ibid.*, HH, p. 266).

<sup>113</sup> Dr. Pegis does not comment on Fr. Boehner's remarks about Ockham's denial of the *species* "beyond saying that Fr. Boehner is paying a high price in Ockham's behalf. For does not such a defense (of the denial of the *species*) free Ockham of the charge of scepticism on the condition of involving St. Thomas in it?" ("Concerning William of Ockham", *Traditio* II, p. 409). This is an easy way out of a difficulty. But is it not also an abuse of the argument from authority? The Church has never decreed that St. Thomas is infallible. Still less has it made the *species* theory a dogma of faith. Not for nothing did Pope Pius XI say that "No one, of course, may exact of professors either more or less than the Church, the mother and teacher of all, demands of them, for on those questions on which different authorities of our Catholic schools express different views and are not in agreement, certainly no teacher can be compelled to accept an opinion which does not appear to him the more logical one" (*Studiorum Ducem*—transl. by James H. Ryan in *The Encyclicals of Pius XI*, B. Herder Book Co., 1927, p. 95). Dr. Pegis himself is "guilty of the very "acme of paradox" if he reduces all philosophy to veiled references to the authority of St. Thomas.



in addition to the intellect and perfect intuitive cognition; but a *species* is not necessary.<sup>114</sup>

This concludes our study of Ockham's teaching on intuitive cognition and abstractive cognition in themselves. As we have seen, he shows that these two forms of cognition are the basis for all of our knowledge. For they are the forms of simple apprehension on which all other forms of knowledge depend. To trace the effects of this fundamental doctrine throughout his teaching on *conceptual* knowledge would be beyond the scope of the present study. However, the following brief account may suffice to indicate the importance of the doctrine of intuitive and abstractive cognition (a) *historically*, from the point of view of the origins of the new orientation towards the theory of knowledge which appears in the 14th century; and (b) *systematically*, i.e., to provide the reader with an outline which will serve as a guide in further studies of the intrinsic merits of the results of this new orientation:—

1. An immediate consequence of Ockham's insistence on the *immediacy* of all our knowledge (i.e., his denial of any *species* whatsoever) is his insistence on the primacy of our knowledge of singulars. Since intuitive cognition is the first form of knowledge, and since intuitive (as well as abstractive) cognition is

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<sup>114</sup> Ad rationem ergo respondeo, quod sola species in phantasia non sufficit ad cognitionem alicuius rei; sed sicut ad cognitionem intuitivam corporalem requiritur potentia et obiectum sine omni specie, ita ad intuitivam intellectualem sufficit obiectum cum intellectu, et ad notitiam primam abstractivam, quae stat cum intuitiva, sufficit notitia intuitiva cum intellectu sed ad secundam abstractivam requiritur habitus, sicut supra dictum est (*Rep.* II, q. 15, PP, p. 270). It should be noted that Ockham's conception of *habitus* in this connection is very simple and devoid of those metaphysical speculations which characterize St. Thomas' conception of *habitus*. Ockham says that all that he means by *habitus* is a disposition inclining the intellect to elicit an act which formerly it could not elicit. For an account of St. Thomas's theory of *habitus* (something midway between potency and act), cfr. Vernon J. Bourke, "The Role of Habitus in the Thomistic Metaphysics of Potency and Act", in *Essays in Thomism* (ed. Robert E. Brennan, O.P., New York: Sheed & Ward, 1942), pp. 101-109, and a more extensive study (unpublished) presented to the University of Toronto as a doctoral dissertation by the same author.

caused without any medium between intellect and object, and since these objects are real things, and the only real things are singulars, it follows that our knowledge starts with the knowledge of singular things.<sup>115</sup>

2. Since, according to Ockham, every singular thing is singular by itself (and is not singularized by something added—e.g., by matter, haecceity, etc.), the problem of universals needs to be restated. We cannot start with universal natures and ask how they are singularized. We can only start with individual things and ask how the concepts which we apply to them are universal:

Nec est quaerenda aliqua causa individuationis . . . sed magis esset quaerenda causa quomodo possibile est aliquid esse commune et universale (*Ord.* d. 2, q. 4, Q).

Thus the question of universals becomes a psychological problem, and not a metaphysical problem.<sup>116</sup> How is this psychological

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<sup>115</sup> Ockham develops this line of reasoning many times in his different works; cfr., for example, *Ord.* d. 3, q. 5 and q. 6. In q. 6 especially Ockham discusses the famous Aristotelian argument for the primacy of universal knowledge—the argument based on the fact that a child begins by calling all men “father”, that in seeing a person in the distance we first say that what we see is “a being”, then “something moving”, etc. He points out a very obvious fact: this argument overlooks a fundamental distinction between universal knowledge and distinct knowledge. Also, “aequivocatio est de communibus et similiter est aequivocatio de notitia magis universalis. Unde dico quod commune est duplex: quoddam est commune per praedicationem essentialem, quia scilicet de pluribus praedicatur in quid et per se primo modo quam aliud, et isto modo animal est communius quam homo, et corpus quam animal. Alius est communius, non per praedicationem in quid et per se primo modo, sed per praedicationem denominativum et quasi per se secundo modo, et isto modo motus localis est quid communius quam color, quia omne coloratum potest moveri localiter, et non omne mobile localiter est coloratum. Similiter est aequivocatio de notitia universalioris, quia quaedam est notitia complexa et quaedam incomplexa”.

<sup>116</sup> This re-statement of the problem of universals, in clear opposition to Scotus' wording of the problem, eliminates the remnants of Platonic Realism which had found their way into scholasticism by way of Aristotle himself. Cfr. our remarks on this point in Ch. 1. Hence the utter absurdity

problem solved?

3. He answers by showing that a singular (or individual thing) is first known in a *proper* (not common) and *simple* (not composite) knowledge. This "first" knowledge (*prima prinitate generationis*) is intuitive cognition.<sup>117</sup>

4. This "first" knowledge, besides being proper and simple, can also be *distinct* knowledge; and for this it is not necessary to have a distinct notion of any universal whatsoever. In other words, a thing can be known distinctly without a knowledge of its *ratio definitiva*.<sup>118</sup>

5. Therefore a thing can be known intellectually without having a universal concept of it.<sup>119</sup>

6. As a matter of fact, a universal concept is less perfect than this proper, simple and distinct knowledge of singulars, besides being posterior to it in the order of generation.<sup>120</sup>

7. From this proper and simple knowledge of singulars we pass (through abstractive cognition of the same singular) to a conceptual and universal knowledge which abstracts from existence and presence and the individual differences of individual objects.<sup>121</sup>

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of trying to wish off on Ockham any "reifying of thought", any "gulf which (he) places between thought and the world of things".

<sup>117</sup> Cfr. *Quodl.* I, q. 13 and *Ord.* d. 3, q. 5.

<sup>118</sup> *Ord.* d. 3, q. 7 and q. 5.

<sup>119</sup> *Ord.* d. 22, q. 1, C.

<sup>120</sup> *Ord.* d. 3, q. 6, G.

<sup>121</sup> Hence again the incorrectness of saying things like this: Ockham needs actual things for knowledge as much as the principle of contradiction is capable of explaining the difference between possible and actual beings —which is not at all! (cfr. A. C. Pegis, "Concerning William of Ockham", *Traditio* II, p. 478).



D. *Summary and Conclusion.*

The relations between Scotus and Ockham on the question of intuitive cognition have been clearly indicated in the course of the preceding analysis. In general, there is unanimity of opinion, even on some of those points where Ockham criticizes Scotus. For though Ockham denies that several of Scotus' distinctions between intuitive and abstractive cognition apply *universally*, he is willing to concede that they do apply to our normal and natural intuitive and abstractive cognition. Ockham definitely parts company with Scotus in denying that a *species* is necessary for abstractive cognition. But for the rest he merely develops Scotus' ideas and follows them through to their logical conclusions. Thus, for instance, though Scotus seems to have had difficulty in admitting that singulars are known by intuitive cognition and directly, Ockham shows that nothing but singulars are known intuitively. Again, in the question of perfect and imperfect intuitive cognition, Ockham develops the ideas of Scotus to show something that Scotus had not touched on, namely, the causal and chronological relations between intuitive and abstractive cognition. Finally, Ockham based his doctrine of intuitive cognition more resolutely and more systematically on an analysis of evidence, though here again it was Scotus who had first appreciated the significance of this doctrine in the light of the problem of certitude.

It is this last point that we would like to stress. Many things have discouraged students of Ockham in the past, but nothing, I think, more than the historians' monotonous repetition of charges of scepticism against him. Whether or not these charges are justified is a question to be decided on facts alone. And these facts are to be found only in the texts of Ockham himself. The question of Ockham's scepticism can never be solved by balancing, one against the other, what Professor Gilson says about Ockham, what Professor Pegis says about Ockham, what Baudry and Moody and Michalski say about Ockham. We have to find out what Ockham has to say for himself. And that is what we have tried to do in the present chapter, allowing the texts of Ockham speak for themselves as much as possible. Ock-

ham's position in the history of philosophy (and our interpretation of Ockham's teaching) should be decided on the basis of Ockham's writings. He could ask for no better fate than to be judged at the bar of reason alone, *sine ira et studio*.

In this connection we should like to quote extensively from an article by Fr. John K. Ryan which appeared in *The New Scholasticism* as early as 1934. It is entitled "Concerning a Matter of Method"<sup>122</sup> and it devotes itself to an analysis of the historical and systematical significance of the argument from the danger of scepticism. To what extent are we justified in using this argument: Such and such a doctrine leads to scepticism, therefore it is false? Fr. Ryan answers by first of all pointing out that this argument appeals to an audience which, among other things, is "sweeping and dogmatic in pronouncements"—an audience which "is yet to become appreciative of careful, searching analysis, fine distinctions and cautiously qualified judgments. For it the refinements and subtleties of criticism are as often as not more than lost. It is wholehearted in its acceptance or rejection of causes and doctrines. It wants its heroes good and its villains bad, and rewards the one with cheers and the other with groans and hisses. Because of such things, among others, there arises the temptation to make use in the classroom and in the book of *haute vulgarisation* of this *argumentum ex consecrariis* (p. 296). He concludes that this method is too often used as "too summary a dismissal of doctrines that cannot be summarily dismissed at all and that remain as great and imposing realities in the world and history of thought" (p. 297). "The only refutatory arguments", he says, "that are completely and unimpeachably genuine are intrinsic and primary. An *argumentum ex consecrariis* is essentially secondary, derivative and extrinsic" and to give it a primary or even prominent place "may be contrary to the best method and the best interests of philosophy" (p. 297). Effectively to refute a philosophical doctrine, therefore, "it is necessary first to understand it. To understand a doctrine it is necessary to approach it and its creator with sympathy" (p. 299). He reminds us that even "the errors of great minds are

<sup>122</sup> *Loc. cit.*, VIII (1934), 293-305.

guesses at great truths, and usually hit some portion of the truth. It is this portion of the truth that must first be established before an effective exposé of the great error can be made. And the experience of establishing this truth, of following the philosopher's march towards it . . . is a discipline that alone can equip the critic for an effective discussion of the doctrine at issue" (p. 299).

It is in the spirit of these methodological principles that we have tried to give an exposition of Ockham's teaching on intuitive cognition. And in applying these principles we have been inspired by Fr. Ryan's confidence in the belief that "because truth is one, a sincere and actual determination 'to follow the argument where it leads' will finally bring the individual philosopher, and philosophy as such, to a consistent and acceptable view of reality" (p. 304).



### PART III

#### SYSTEMATICAL

In processu generationis humanae semper crevit notitia veritatis (Scotus, *Oxon.* IV, d. 1, q. 3, n. 8; XVI, 136a).

Non omnia dicta a philosophis, etiam assertive, erant ab eis probata per necessariam rationem naturalem; sed frequenter non habebant nisi quasdam probabiles persuasiones, vel vulgarem opinionem praecedentium philosophorum (Scotus, *Oxon.* IV, d. 43, q. 2, n. 16; XX, 46a).

Nihil ponendum est necessario requiri naturaliter ad aliquem effectum, nisi ad illud inducat ratio certa procedens ex per se notis vel experientia certa (Ockham, *Rep.* II, q. 15, 0).



## CHAPTER IV

### CONSEQUENCES OF THE DOCTRINE OF INTUITIVE COGNITION

It is common knowledge that intuition is playing an ever increasing role in modern philosophical thought. Bergson had his intuition of pure duration. Phenomenologists appeal to their intuition of pure essences. Specialists in aesthetics speak of some kind of intuition as a criterion for the apprehension and appreciation of artistic values. And the more philosophers use this word, the more obscure does its meaning become.<sup>1</sup>

But this is not the place to try to bring some order into the confusion of modern usages of the term "intuition". It is, however, the place to note that neo-scholastics are not blameless in this regard. For a long time many of them have been aware of the fact that the exclusive abstractionism of the Thomistic theory of knowledge is unsatisfactory. But instead of turning to their scholastic heritage for enlightenment on this point they have tried to graft modern ideas of intuition onto the old theory of abstraction—and usually with disastrous results. For example, M. Maritain has come forward with a highly original (and very obscure) abstractive intuition of Being!<sup>2</sup> In scholastic terminology, of course, an abstractive intuition is simply a contradiction in terms; so everyone will readily agree with him when he says that he does not use the word "intuition" in the technical sense which the ancients attached to that term.<sup>3</sup>

Even more distressing than this tendency to draw on the confusion of modern philosophy for an idea which is really integral

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. K. W. Wild, *Intuition* (Cambridge, 1938) for a discussion of intuition according to Bergson, Spinoza, Croce, Whitehead, and Jung, with chapters on Religious intuition, Moral and Aesthetic intuition, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. *A Preface to Metaphysics* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1940), p. 43 *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46; cfr. also other references in note 5 of our Introduction.



to the finest development on their own system is the attitude of those neo-scholastics who obstinately cling to exclusive abstractionism in the mistaken belief that any form of intuitionism bears the "stigma" of modernity.

Both of these tendencies should be offset by the conclusions we are able to draw from the historical study of Scotus and Ockham we have just completed:

1. The fact of intuitive cognition has been definitely established.

2. As a consequence, exclusive abstractionism has been just as definitely disproved.

3. In addition, since intuitive cognition is incompatible with any kind of *species intelligibilis*, and since Ockham has shown that it is not necessary to postulate a *species* for abstractive cognition either, the mechanics of cognition can no longer be explained along the lines of metaphysical speculation characteristic of the theory of abstraction.

4. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that intuitive cognition explains how it is possible for us to have an immediate knowledge of singulars, even material singulars. In this connection it should be noted that nowadays immediacy is taken to be an essential element of every kind of intuition. But "immediacy" can be understood in two ways: (a) as a direct apprehension of a conclusion or principle with a total absence, or at least a minimum, of inference, interpretation or discursive reasoning; this kind of immediacy can best be described as *insight* or *perceptive penetration*: (b) a second meaning of immediacy is implied by what is called "*presentational immediacy*"; this is the direct presence to the mind of the object known—whether this object be an extra-mental reality (material or spiritual), images, emotional or affective states, and so forth. Though Scotus seems to have admitted immediacy in the first sense, such immediacy is not essential to the scholastic doctrine of intuitive cognition. Both Scotus and Ockham insist that it is immediacy in the second sense (presentational immediacy) that is essential to intuitive cognition as they understand it in

contradistinction to abstractive cognition. And it is this presentational immediacy which guarantees our evident judgments of the existence and non-existence of contingent facts.

5. Once it has been shown that singulars can be known immediately, both by intuitive and abstractive cognition, it is easy to arrive at the conclusion that singulars are *first* known in the order of generation. The recognition of this simple and evident fact of experience was the greatest single contribution of the proponents of intuitive cognition. And it is a sad commentary on the *a priori* "metaphysical" psychology of the early scholastics that it was ever necessary to "prove" such a fact. In the process of freeing us from these metaphysical preconceptions, intuitive cognition clarifies the notion of evidence and certitude, making it possible for us to face the critical aporia on a basis where its solution or refutation is possible. Any theory which admits a *species* will either dismiss the critical aporia as not allowed, and this is unscientific and an appeal to emotions, or it admits it, and then it has to prove that the *species* represents something which in itself is not known.

6. First of all, by eliminating media between intellect and object (such as *species intelligibiles*), intuitive cognition makes it possible for us to ground our knowledge on the safe basis of an *immediate* contact with reality. In other words, instead of basing evidence on necessary essences or some vague sort of appeal to "the being of things", it is possible, after having established the fact of intuitive cognition, to base evidence and certitude on experience. By limiting this experiential basis to a systematic minimum (for example, *scio me vivere*, with St. Augustine), a solid foundation for metaphysics as theologic is given.<sup>4</sup> Without any other appeal to experience whatsoever it is possible, as Scotus has shown, to *demonstrate* the existence of

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<sup>4</sup> For a description of Metaphysics as Theologic cfr. Fr. Philotheus Boehner, "A Proof of the Existence of God according to Fr. Pacificus Borgmann, O.F.M.", *Franciscan Studies* XXIV (New Series II, 1943). 374-386.

God.<sup>5</sup> And this assures us of at least one extra-mental reality. Once the existence of God has been demonstrated *on this basis* absolute solipsism becomes untenable. This in no way implies that the realm of evidence shrinks to the point where I am forced to acknowledge that in seeing a stone, for example, I can be absolutely certain that I am seeing but not certain of the existence of the stone.<sup>6</sup> It does imply, however, that *if* someone maintains that the realm of evidence shrinks to such minute proportions, it is still possible to refute idealism *even on such a narrow basis*. And this cannot be interpreted as a formulation of the "Cartesian closed *Cogito* as the starting point of evident knowledge" in the sense that "it forces European thought to *prove* the existence of an actual world of things outside man".<sup>7</sup> Neither Ockham nor any scholastic formulated the Cartesian *Cogito* as the basis or starting point of evident knowledge. Ockham and later scholastics take intuitive cognition as the starting point for evident knowledge. And neither Ockham nor any scholastic ever felt the personal need to prove the existence of an actual world of things outside man. If anything, they were a trifle over-optimistic about this world of things outside. Some of them, however, were realistic enough to remember that everybody did not share this optimism with them. They remembered this historical fact—that the Academicians, for example, had suffered under the philosophical experience of scepticism. They remembered that St. Augustine himself had suffered under the same experience. They realized, therefore, that such an ex-

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<sup>5</sup> Cfr. especially Scotus' *De Primo Principio* (ed. Vivès, Vol. IV, pp. 721-799; also ed. Müller, Herder, 1941). The importance of Scotus' proof lies in the fact that the proposition on which the proof depends can be verified solely on the basis of intuitive cognition of a subjective fact (e.g., consciousness of the fact that I am living, knowing, willing or the like). This eliminates the *need* for an appeal to sense-knowledge, which already presupposes the existence of things outside the mind.

<sup>6</sup> This is Professor Pegis' conclusion with regard to Ockham's teaching on intuitive cognition (cfr. "Concerning William of Ockham", *Traditio* II, 478-9). We have shown previously that it is impossible to attribute such an attitude to Ockham.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*



perience was possible, at least for others if not for themselves. And they remembered that St. Augustine had proposed a solution for this difficulty. For the benefit of anyone who experienced the same difficulty they handed on this Augustinian solution, reinforced with their clear descriptions of evidence and certitude on the basis of intuitive cognition. Hence Ockham did not invent the critical aporia and foist it off on European thought, as Dr. Pegis suggests. For that matter, neither did Descartes. It was invented by the Academicians, if it can be said to have been invented at all. And if anyone is responsible for "foisting it off" on European thought, that man is St. Augustine. But the extent of his "foisting" is limited to the fact that he did not dismiss a very real problem by turning his blind eye to it. He recognized it as a real problem and solved it.<sup>8</sup> Ockham also faced the problem—at least insofar as he admitted that it was psychologically possible—and he solved it in exactly the same way as St. Augustine did. This attitude seems to be infinitely superior to the attitude adopted by many neo-scholastics, namely, that there is no problem. Professor Gilson is perhaps right when he insists that Thomism cannot be critical,<sup>9</sup> for the Thomistic theory of cognition is built up on the supposition that Realism be taken for granted. But this does not prove that Thomism *should not* be critical. And the efforts of innumerable Thomists to make it critical are evidence of a more realistic attitude than the one

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<sup>8</sup> Cfr. *Contra Academicos* and passages in the *De Trinitate* (passim). It is interesting to note that Ockham, when he touches on this problem, quotes extensively from the *De Trinitate* (cfr., for example, *Ord. Prol.* 1, HH-II). This is all the more significant in view of Moody's observation that Ockham "rarely cites St. Augustine in matters of epistemology, but on nearly every point goes back to the text of Aristotle" (*The Logic of William of Ockham*, p. 9). It is worth noting, incidentally, that Aristotle himself, and Plato also, had epistemological difficulties which loomed large in the development of their respective "systems". For an account of these difficulties and their effects on the orientation of Platonism and Aristotelianism, cfr. Harold Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Plato and the Academy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1944), vol. I, pp. 64-80.

<sup>9</sup> Cfr. E. Gilson, *Realisme Thomiste et Critique de la Connaissance* (Paris: Vrin, 1939) and *Realisme Methodique* (Paris: Tequi, n.d.).

Professor Pegis adopts in repeating the critical aporia as *ultra vires*.<sup>10</sup> For the fact remains that it is necessary to prove the existence of a world of things outside the mind—for some people. And unless you can prove the existence of such a world, your philosophical system is meaningless—for those same people. Conversely, a system which can and does undertake to develop such a proof is a more catholic system, because it is more universal in its appeal.

7. Therefore intuitive cognition makes it possible to construct a real science of metaphysics which is not restricted to sense-data as a starting point.<sup>11</sup> Not that the nature of the soul or mind is

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<sup>10</sup> Cfr. the account of these efforts given by Fr. L.-M. Regis, O.P., "La critique neothomiste est-elle Thomiste?", *Philosophie*, Cahier II (Etudes et Recherches Publiées par le Collège Dominicain d'Ottawa, n. III, 1938), pp. 95 *et seq.*

<sup>11</sup> A discussion of the two classical starting points for metaphysics is to be found in two articles, one by Vernon J. Bourke and one by Hunter Guthrie, S.J., under the common title: "Two Tendencies in the Scholastic Approach to Metaphysics", *Proceedings of the Amer. Catholic Philos. Assoc.* XIV (1938), 134-151. Dr. Bourke's article is entitled: "Experience of extra-mental reality as the Starting Point of St. Thomas' Metaphysics"; Fr. Guthrie's article is entitled: "The Intuitional Tendency in the Scholastic Approach". Both articles are excellent introductions to the different points of view. One remark of Fr. Guthrie's is very important for a proper appreciation of these two approaches. He says: "It is useful, first of all, to recall what was St. Augustine's starting point in his search for truth. Unlike St. Thomas, who wrote many of his great works for the younger students following his courses, St. Augustine wrote against mature adversaries, some of whose doctrines he had himself professed in his youth . . . Their viewpoints are on different planes of psychological activity" (p. 145). The recognition of the fact that there are two such different planes of psychological activity may help many neo-scholastics to overcome their scruples about the critical aporia. The approach from "sense-data" has its advantages (along with many disadvantages); but the approach from "intelligible-data" has its advantages also (and fewer disadvantages). Fr. Guthrie sums it up thus: "St. Thomas began his search for truth in the sensible world, which is the only object of thought familiar to a student. From the sensible world he leads the student to an intelligible world, and that ascent imposed problems whose solutions colored his whole system of thought. St. Augustine, writing for adversaries already

taken as a starting point; not even that the existence of the soul is held to be known by intuitive cognition.<sup>12</sup> But the states of the soul or mind are known intuitively, and their relation to my Ego is also known intuitively—i.e., I know by intuitive cognition that they are *my* states of mind. These states of mind are known with certitude. And nothing is known with as much certitude. Now an analysis of these states of mind (which are evident facts) can provide me with sufficient data to begin a classification of beings according to the *passiones entis disiunctivae*. This classification enables me to develop a proof of the existence of God. After that we can continue our classification of other beings, extending it to include *all* beings, real and possible.<sup>13</sup>

8. Finally, the doctrine of intuitive cognition provides us with a guarantee for the introspective method in psychology (which method is presupposed, of course, in our discussion of the two preceding points), and allows for the development of psychology along empirical lines, as against the former "metaphysical" approach. In other words, the fact of intuitive cognition is the philosophical justification for all descriptive analysis of psychological facts. The history of the doctrine of intuitive cognition, therefore, is in part a history of the transition from a metaphysics of knowledge to a descriptive analysis of the facts of cognition.

familiar with the intricate processes of thought and sceptical in their attitude toward truth, began his endeavors to establish truth at a point most likely to be admitted by his readers. He started with the mind and the self-evident truth of its own activities" (p. 145).

<sup>12</sup> Both Ockham and Scotus state expressly that neither the soul itself (as substance) nor the existence of the soul can be known by intuitive cognition. Ockham goes even further in stating that *no* substance can be known intuitively; we can only know *existents* by intuitive cognition—the nature of these existents is arrived at only by discursive reasoning.

<sup>13</sup> For further details on the *passiones entis disiunctivae* and this concept of metaphysics as a real science, cfr. Allan Wolter, O.F.M., *The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Scotus* (Franciscan Institute Publications No. 3, St. Bonaventure, N. Y., 1946).



On the basis of these considerations, a real systematization of scholastic philosophy becomes possible. The scholastics themselves did not leave us such a systematization. It is therefore a task to be undertaken by their modern disciples. No one expects, of course, that neo-scholastics will be able to evolve a presuppositionless philosophy. But everyone has a right to expect a clear statement of what their presuppositions are.

## EPILOGUE

As a corollary to our discussions, both historical and systematical, we may be permitted to express the hope that this book shows, in some small way, how necessary it is for us to revise the current conceptions of later scholasticism, especially the scholasticism of the fourteenth century. The belief that the fourteenth century was a period of decline, and that this decline is characterized by a spirit of open and avowed scepticism can only make sense in the light of the following acute observation by Professor Gilson: "The man to whom we give (the name sceptic) . . . sometimes appears as such because his standard of truth is more exacting than our own."<sup>14</sup> We have tried to show, by an exposition of texts, that Scotus and Ockham at least cannot be called sceptics by anyone with an exacting standard of truth. Perhaps a similar study of other fourteenth century scholastics would reveal that they, too, were trying to refine and build up, and not to tear down and destroy what others had built up.

As Fr. Ryan has remarked, "our interpretations of thought, whether of ourselves or of others, cannot be mechanistic. We are not machines, not even thinking machines, and our thought is not a mechanical process following its inevitable and predetermined course, whether for good or evil."<sup>15</sup> This, and historical facts, argue against an interpretation of the history of philosophy which sees "in each instance of philosophical thinking (that) both the philosopher and his particular doctrine are ruled from above by an impersonal necessity"<sup>16</sup> . . . which necessity is interpreted as the inevitability of falling into scepticism if one disagrees with certain opinions of Aristotle. Just as

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<sup>14</sup> *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, p. 98.

<sup>15</sup> John K. Ryan, "Concerning a Matter of Method", *The New Scholasticism*, VIII (1934), p. 305.

<sup>16</sup> E. Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, p. 307.

surely, this view of Fr. Ryan's, backed up by historical facts, argues that "a *human* construction must be put on the transition from doctrines to deeds in the case of others as well as of ourselves. In such constructions, charity and understanding prompt us to seek first not the evil and the error that are known or feared but rather the truth that was the object of the intellect and the good that was the object of the will".<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> John K. Ryan, *op. cit.*, p. 305.



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